

PLUCK AND LUCK

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

HARRY E. WOLFF, PUBLISHER, INC., 166 WEST 23D STREET, NEW YORK

No. 1309

NEW YORK, JULY 4, 1923

Price 7 Cents

THE PRIDE OF THE VOLUNTEERS; OR, BURKE HALLIDAY, THE BOY FIREMAN.

EX-FIRE-CHIEF HARRISON.
AND OTHER STORIES.



Then he heard a great shout from below as the people caught a glimpse of him. He remembered that, and then as the merciless flames touched him behind, he gathered the young girl tightly to his breast, and leaped from the window.

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Issued weekly—Subscription price, \$3.50 per year; Canada, \$4.00; Foreign, \$4.50. Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 160 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, February 10, 1913, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y. under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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THE PRIDE OF THE VOLUNTEERS

OR, BURKE HALLIDAY, THE BOY FIREMAN

By EX-FIRE-CHIEF WARDEN

CHAPTER I.—The Fire Companies of Redboro'.

The quiet little village of Redboro', way back in the mountains, some four hours' ride by rail from New York, was startled one day by the shrill whistle of a locomotive engine. For years and years the village had nestled down between the mountains, in a beautiful little valley, through which flowed one of the tributary streams of the Susquehanna, with nothing to disturb its Rip Van Winkle slumbers. It had moved along in the even tenor of its way, with one or two small factories utilizing the fine water power the little river afforded. The young men and maidens had grown up together there, and married and settled down to live as their parents had done before them. But now all that had changed. The progress of the age demanded that railroads should tap the country in every direction, and bring the treasures of the country to the great markets of the nation.

The little village began to put on city airs. Great factories went up along the water course, and tenement houses for the use of the operatives went up with them. With the population thus increased, new fields of enterprise opened to men of every calling. Redboro' was no longer a "Sleepy Hollow" settlement, but a thriving young city, with a rushing, pushing, busy population with whom competition was the life of trade. One night a fire broke out in one of the tenement houses. Built of wood, it burned up like tinder, and several lives were lost. That was a terrible experience for Redboro'. The property owners became alarmed. A meeting of citizens was called, at which the situation was discussed. It was resolved to organize a fire company at once, and volunteer members were called for.

The young men, and a good many who were not so very young, volunteered with great enthusiasm. So many desired to join that a second company was organized. Then a hook and ladder company was called for and the roll promptly filled up. The whole town was full of the subject. In organizing the second company a youth not more than seventeen years old desired to join. He was a sturdy, young fellow, with laughing, blue eyes and pleasant, open countenance, and had the reputation of being the

fastest runner, best leaper and most expert boxer in Redboro'. Everybody liked Burke Halliday for his many good qualities of head and heart. One young man objected to him on the ground that he was a "boy."

"When did you cease to be one yourself," Burke indignantly asked the dudish objector, which brought down the house and made the dude as mad as a hornet.

"We don't want any boys," said the fellow. "They will be in our way at a fire."

"So they will," retorted Burke; "so you had better keep away now. I am a boy. I expect to be one as long as I live, and when my head is gray I'll be one of the old boys still."

"By jingo!" exclaimed one of the others, "I like that kind of talk. He's got the stuff in him. I move that we tack two years more onto him and take him in."

It was carried with a hurrah, and Joe Prendergast, the young man who objected, was as mad as a hornet. He was laughed at by the others, and Burke forthwith became the pet of the company.

"What shall we call the company?" Jack Alton, who had been elected foreman, asked.

"Call it 'The Boys' Company,'" suggested Joe, with a sneer.

"Call it the 'Dude Fireman's company,'" suggested another, "in honor of Joe Prendergast."

Joe was mad. He sprang to his feet and shook his fist at the speaker, saying:

"I can wallop the 'dude' out of you in two minutes, Bill Hawkins!"

"But I'm not a 'dude,'" said Bill, laughing good naturedly. "I'm a fireman. What are you?"

"I'm a man!" he replied, drawing himself up with great dignity.

Hawkins gave a prolonged whistle, at which there was a roar of laughter.

"I move we call it 'The Wide Awake,'" suggested Burke Halliday, the youngest member of the company.

"That's a good name," said Alton. "I like it very much."

Jack was an old New York fireman, who had seen much service in the city. The name was adopted—as were the red tanned shirt and fireman's hat. Jack called together every

night to give them points. They met in a vacant building, the use of which had been tendered them. At last the engines and the hook-and-ladder truck, hose-carriage and hose came, and a grand parade in uniform followed the day after their arrival. Such an excitement had never been seen in Redboro' before, and everybody turned out to make a gala day of it. The old settlers looked on in wondering amazement at the progress of Young America. One evening Burke heard the foreman telling about a negro who belonged to the engine he was attached to in New York. He was interested.

"By George!" he exclaimed, "that's just the racket! We must have a 'coon,' to bring us water at a hot fire."

The others laughed.

"Oh, you may laugh, but we're going to have the 'coon'! I know the one we want."

Jack smiled, and remarked:

"I guess Joe would draw the line at coons."

"Of course he will; but what do we care for that? Joe isn't much of a fireman, anyway."

"What's your coon's name?"

"Pete Echols, but he is known only as Pete."

"What's he good for?"

"Good for anything—fight, fun, fire and work."

"That's rather a remarkable combination of good qualities for one coon to possess. Bring him around and let us see him. We have got to have a handy man around to look after things, and if we can pick up a good coon, so much the better."

That evening Burke brought Pete to the headquarters of the Wide Awake fire company. He was as black as tar, about twenty years of age, strong as a mule, and as good-natured as a sunbeam.

"Here's your curly head," said Burke, introducing Pete to the foreman.

Jack looked at Pete from head to foot, and then asked Burke:

"Do you know him?"

"Yes."

"How long?"

"Five or six years?"

"Is he honest?"

"Yes—you can trust him with anything except a chicken. He draws the line at chickens—a fishing line with a grain of corn on the end of it."

"Hol' on dar, Burke," said Pete, "I doan' want none ob dat. Dis heah am bizness."

"Of course it is. That's what you say to the chickens," returned Burke. "But we'll drop that, as we have nothing to do with chickens. He's just the coon we want, Jack."

Jack thought so, too, and Jack had the say about it. Pete became a member of the company in a way. When the new engine house was finished the beautiful engine was placed in it, and the hall upstairs became a sort of clubroom for the use of the members of the company. The other company adopted the name of The Redboro' Fire Company, and elected an old ex-fireman foreman. His name was Kaufman. He was a German who had been in this country many years.

The boys really longed for a fire in order that they might be able to show their hand at it and show the town what they could do. At last

the alarm came. The firebell located the fire, and in a moment every member of the two companies sprang from the work he was doing and made for their headquarters at full speed. At the first tap of the bell Pete threw open the door of the engine-house and laid out the rope by which the boys were to pull it. They laid hold and dashed away at full speed, and reached the fire about two minutes ahead of the Redboro's. The fire was in an old frame building which burned like shavings. Nothing could save it, and so Jack turned the hose on the other houses to save them. In the adjoining house lived a well-to-do family named Houghton. The family remained in the building until the great heat from the flames set it on fire. Then the whole side seemed to blaze up all at once, as if it had been saturated with oil. Of course the family were panic-stricken, and made frantic efforts to save themselves. The house was filled with flame and smoke so quickly that scarcely half of them succeeded in getting out of the different rooms in time to find their way down the stairs. Bessie Houghton, the young seventeen-year-old daughter of the family, succeeded in getting out. Then she looked wildly around for her mother.

"Oh, my mother—my poor mother!" she screamed.

Instantly Jack Alton sprang through the tongue of flame that shot out of the door, and disappeared from sight. A cry of horror went up from the crowd. They had never seen anything like that in Redboro' before, and now they expected to see his charred bones in the ashes the next day. But they were doomed to be surprised in more ways than one. A couple of minutes later he reappeared—rolled out on the ground with Bessie's mother in his arms. Both were nearly suffocated. Bessie was frantic, calling upon everybody to save her mother and her aunt.

"Is there another in there?" one of the firemen asked.

"Yes—my aunt—my Aunt Peggy is in there!"

Four men made unsuccessful efforts to get into the house; but the flames fairly boiled out of the door and drove them back. Bessie's mother now joined her cries to those of her daughter, and from the two it was learned that the aunt lived in the room up one flight—at the head of the stairs.

"Too late! Too late!" cried several firemen, as the last one was driven back by the flames.

Bessie looked around with a despairing look in her face, as if in search of someone. Burke Halliday was the one nearest to her in his red shirt and helmet. She sprang to his side, caught him with both hands and cried:

"Won't you save my poor aunt?"

"I'll try," replied Burke, and pulling the helmet well down over his eyes, he made a run and leaped through the open door right in the face of a seething blast of red flame.

"Hol' on dar! Hol' on dar, I tole yer!" screamed black Pete, almost beside himself when he saw Burke make the run. But before the last word fell from his lips the young fireman had disappeared from sight. A cry of shuddering amazement went up from firemen and spectators alike.

"The boy is lost!" groaned Jack Alton.

"My Good!" gasped Joe Prendergast. "What does the young fool mean?"

Bessie Houghton was dumfounded at the terrible doom to which she believed the youth had rushed at her solicitation, and instantly ceased her cries. She held her breath as she fastened her eyes on the spot where she had last seen the young fireman. A cry—a single cry from the crowd caused everyone to look up at the window of the aunt's room. There stood the youth with the form of a little old woman in his arms. Her clothing was on fire, and she appeared to be unconscious.

"The ladder! The ladder!" cried Alton, with a frantic energy that startled everyone.

But Burke did not wait for the ladder. He made a motion to throw his burden out of the window and Jack rushed forward, crying out:

"Let her drop!"

He did let her drop, and Jack caught her. The next moment Burke sprang out, and landing on his feet, rolled over on the ground gasping like one in the last stage of suffocation.

CHAPTER II.—Burke, the Young Hero.

When Burke struck the ground a wild shout went up from the thousands of spectators who witnessed his daring act. They made a rush to get him, but the firemen and the few policemen managed to drive them back. Jack turned the little old woman over to some friends of the family, and hastened to look after Burke. The young fireman was as limp as a rag, and utterly oblivious to what was going on about him.

"Burke, my boy!" he called, shaking him roughly, "are you hurt? Speak, Burke, old fellow! My God, I fear he is killed!"

At that moment the greatest excitement ever known in Redboro' was in full sway. The people, carried away by the intrepid daring of the youth, rushed forward to aid him, pushing the firemen themselves almost into the flames. But the police at last managed to get possession of him, and had him carried into the nearest drug store, where a physician took him in charge. The crowd had seen him do what stern, strong men shrank from doing, and had saved the life of an old woman almost at the expense of his own.

"Brave boy!" they cried.

"He's a hero!" chorused hundreds.

Then they left the burning building to crowd around the little drug store where he had been carried, to hear the extent of his injuries and sympathize with him.

"How is he, doctor?" some man in the crowd asked, as the doctor came out of the drug store.

"He is pretty badly roasted," was the reply, "but he'll be all right in a week or two."

He was laid on a stretcher and carried home—the crowd making a passage for him as the bearers bore him along. They followed him to his humble home. His widowed mother was frantic with grief, but grew calmer when the doctor assured her that he was in no danger whatever. When the Wide Awakes returned to their headquarters they appointed a committee to visit the humble home of Burke Halliday and

express to him and his mother their sense of his heroic conduct.

"The boy has proved himself the man of the company," said Jack Alton, the foreman.

The next day pretty Bessie Houghton, accompanied by her father, called at the cottage and asked to see Burke. She was shown into the room where he lay on his back on his bed.

"Oh, Mr. Halliday!" she cried, "I hope you are not much hurt."

"Well, I hope so, too," he said, "but I am in great pain. Burns are not pleasant things to have, you know. How is your aunt?"

"She is burned in a few spots, but feels so thankful over her escape alive that she says she don't mind the pain. See here. She sent me here to give you these as a token of her gratitude for your heroic conduct," and she displayed a handsome gold watch and a well-filled silk purse, both of which she laid on the table beside him.

Burke looked at them in silence for a minute or two, and then said:

"I am much obliged to you, Miss Bessie, but I—I can't accept anything for doing what I did. I am a fireman, you know, and it was my duty to save anyone in peril from fire."

"But you must take them for her sake," said Bessie. "If you do not it will break her heart, and she is such a dear, good old soul. She says she would have been roasted to death but for you. She doesn't talk of anything else, and she is coming to see you just as soon as she can get out. Say you will accept them, now."

Burke still hesitated. He knew not how much money was in the purse. They were poor—very poor—having nothing but his small wages which he earned in one of the mills, and what his mother and young sister earned with their needles. Bessie's eyes filled with tears.

"Burke Halliday," she said, "when my last hope was gone yesterday I turned to you and begged you to save my poor aunt. You quickly sprang forward and saved her at the risk of your own life. I now asked you again to accept these for my sake. I have set my heart on it. You cannot refuse me the pleasure, I know."

How could he? Bessie was about his own age, and very pretty. He had known her all his life, and always admired her.

"Yes, I'll do it!" he said, after a pause of several moments.

"Oh, thank you ever so much!" she said. "You don't know how glad you make me! You have made me your friend for life!"

"Burke, my boy," said Bessie's father, taking his hand, "you have made every man in Redboro' your fast friend. The whole town is talking about you, and we owe you a debt of gratitude we don't know how we can repay. When you get over this come to my store, and I'll give you a place there where you can earn better pay than at the mill."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," said Burke, his eyes filling with tears. "I'll accept your offer for my mother's sake."

"He loves his mother," said Mrs. Halliday. "He has been a good boy," and the proud look in her eyes told that the tribute came from her heart.

"I know he is," said Mr. Houghton. "We all know Burke. Don't forget to call on me, my

boy," and Mr. Houghton shook hands with him and went away, leaving Bessie to return home at her leisure.

Bessie remained to talk with the widow and Mamie Halliday. The sister was two years younger than her brother, very pretty and industrious. They had never been anything more than a speaking acquaintance between the two girls heretofore, but now they talked like old friends. Old Peggy Bethune was the maiden aunt of Bessie Houghton's mother. She was rich and eccentric, but generous and kind in all things. She had been living for years with her niece, who loved her dearly for her good qualities. Such was the person whom Burke had snatched from the jaws of death. Bessie and Mamie talked about many things that interested them, but during the conversation Bessie spoke of Burke as a real hero, which greatly pleased Mamie.

"Brother never was afraid of anything," said his sister, proudly, "and he is as good as he is brave."

"All brave men are good-hearted," remarked Bessie; "at least I've always heard they were."

"I guess it's true," Mamie said.

Bessie finally took her leave, saying she would come again as soon as her aunt was able to get out and come with her. In another week Burke was out, and had been on the street. The Wide Awakes gave him a reception at the engine-house that was attended by quite a number of ladies, among them Bessie Houghton. She was the prettiest girl in the room, and was sought after by more than any other. Joe Prendergast had been paying her attention for months, and she was somewhat partial to him. But on this evening she seemed disposed to give all her smiles to the hero of the hour.

"Burke is the hero of all our firemen," she said to Joe, "and your company ought to be proud of him."

That was a bitter dose for Joe, hating Burke as he did.

"He is a brave fellow," he remarked, "but you ladies will ruin him as sure as fate. No boy—and he is nothing else—can long stand such flattery without becoming vain and conceited."

"I hope for better things for Burke," she replied, "though I know a good many men become very conceited without any flattery at all. Burke seems to have a great deal of hard sense, though, and it may not hurt him."

Another week passed, and old Peggy Bethune, accompanied by Bessie Houghton, paid a visit to the Halliday cottage. Burke was not at home, and Mamie went in quest of him. She found him down at the engine-house, and carried him back home with her. The old lady took both his hands in hers, and said:

"I have come to thank you for saving my life, Burke Halliday, and——"

"Oh, that's all right, Miss Bethune," he said, interrupting her good-naturedly. "Thank Bessie—she put me up to it. You know a fellow can't get away from her when she gets after him."

Bessie laughed and blushed when she heard him say that, and was about to speak, when old Aunt Peggy said:

"Yes, I know all that you Burke. Several other men tried to do that you did and failed. I am sorry you were hurt, but I'll burn you worse

than that if you ever call me Miss Bethune again. I am Aunt Peggy to you and your mother and sister. Do you hear that?"

"Yes, Aunt Peggy."

"There! That's a good boy. If I were fifty years younger than I am I'd set my cap for you."

"Why, Aunt Peggy, you are not fifty years old yet?" exclaimed Burke.

"You young rascal! Don't you try to blarney me! You can't do it," and they all joined in a hearty laugh together.

After further conversation Bessie said:

"Father told me to tell you that he was in need of another clerk in the store, and that you could have the position if you wanted it."

"I do want it," he replied, very frankly.

"Then go down there and take it," said Aunt Peggy.

"I will go after dinner."

"Oh, I am so glad!" said Mamie, passing her arm around Bessie's waist.

"So am I," returned Bessie, "for he'll be a great help to father."

In the afternoon Burke went down to the store and was given a situation where he could earn decent pay, and a clerk was instructed to initiate him into the mysteries of dry goods and groceries. The very next day after he was installed behind the counter Burke saw black Pete enter the store and looked around as if in search of someone.

"What is it, Pete?" he asked.

"Dar you is, Burke," replied Pete. "I declar' ter gracious I'se glad ter see yer. Don't yer go fo' ter go back on yer nigger fren', Burke."

"Don't lose your nut, Pete. I'm Burke Halliday all the time," extending his hand.

"I tole 'em dat," said Pete, grasping his hand and shaking it warmly, and then he turned away and left the store.

CHAPTER III.—The Battle of the Firemen.

"What did he want?" Mr. Houghton asked of Burke, having seen the meeting without having been able to hear what was said.

"Nothing," replied Burke. "He belongs down at the Wide Awake engine-house, where some of the boys had been telling him that I wouldn't shake hands with him since I have left the mill and became a clerk."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him I was the same old Burke Halliday, and shook hands with him. Pete is a jolly good nigger, sir, and a great friend of mine, and I never go back on a friend."

The merchant looked at him in silence for a minute or two, and said:

"You did right, Burke. Never get too proud to recognize a friend, no matter how humble he may be," and he grasped his hand in token of his approbation of his course.

One day the fire-bell struck, and in an instant the firemen were donning red shirts and helmets, and rushing downstairs to the engine-room, where black Pete had everything in readiness for them. Out of the engine-house they dashed, and with a yell set off in the direction of the fire.

The fire was in a vacant building, and as the Wide Awakes threw the first stream of water on it a cheer went up from the spectators. The fire was soon under control after both engines began to play on it, and in an hour's time it was quenched entirely. But as the engine were about to leave to return to their respective quarters, someone of the Wide Awakes called out to the Redboros:

"Why don't you fellers get up and hustle yourselves when you start for a fire?"

The Redboro' crowd was mad at again being second in reaching a fire, and did not care to be gayed by anybody.

"We don't want any lip from you fellows," replied one of their number.

"You want more leg and less lip," said Burke, at which there was a roar of laughter at the expense of the Redboros.

"Py shiminy!" exclaimed Kaufman, the big Dutch foreman of the Redboros, shaking his trumpet at Burke. "Auf you say dot so much I preak you lip mit dat horn."

Burke laughed and cried out:

"Sauerkraut!"

Another roar, and the exasperated German ran up and struck him with his trumpet. That was enough. A general free fight instantly followed, and nearly two score of men began pummeling each other with might and main. Jack Alton saw Kaufman strike Burke, and the next moment he was wiping up the ground with him. The police tried in vain to separate them. The moment one couple were parted another clenched, and so the fight went on. It lasted nearly half an hour without either company getting the advantage. By that time the mayor came up and began calling on them to desist. By degrees peace was restored, but nearly one-half the combatants had black eyes and bruised faces. A few noses were out of joint. Both companies returned to their quarters, vowing vengeance again each other at some future time.

Two days later another alarm sounded. It was a sudden, sharp call, and every fireman sprang to his feet to hasten to his post. The fire was in a tall tenement house only two blocks away from Houghton's store. Burke saw the smoke and heard the screams of the women as soon as he left the store. The thought that he might be able to save life if he hastened to the fire at once, instead of going to the engine-house, sent him there at full speed. He saw the smoke issuing out of several windows, and heard women and children screaming frantically for help. Dashing up four flights of stairs, he found a lot of women and children so panic-stricken that they did not know what to do or which way to run.

"Keep quiet!" he yelled, "or you'll all roast to death!"

So clear and fearless were his tones that they instantly obeyed him. Just then his feet struck a pile of clothes lines. Taking it up, he called out to the women:

"Take hold of the rope, all of you, and run downstairs with it. I'll hold to this end."

They instantly obeyed him, and the next moment all the women and children seized the rope and started down the stairs. He pulled steadily to prevent them from falling on the stairs, till they all reached the sidewalk. Then

he drew up the rope, ran to the front window just as the Wide Awakes dashed up, threw one end out, crying to those below:

"Tie the hose pipe and send it up!"

They tied it, and the next instant Burke began to haul it up, hand over hand, while huge black volumes boiled out the window all around him.

CHAPTER IV.—The Jealous Clerk and the Young Fireman's Discharge.

Whenever a great peril threatens an individual an all-absorbing interest at once centers in that person. Everybody who becomes aware of the danger that menaces the individual instantly becomes a mental speculator on the imperiled one's chances of escape, though a tremendous excitement may be raging at the moment. So it was in the case of Burke Halliday when he began drawing the hose up to the fourth story window of the burning tenement house. At last he got the nozzle in his hands and turned the water loose on the fire at the further end of the room. It struck the ceiling and spread out into a broad sheet and almost instantly extinguished the flames. But the fire in the halls and rooms below sent such a dense volume of smoke pouring into the room that he found all his tremendous struggle to be futile. That he would have to retreat was now plain. But how? That was the question. A long, red tongue of flame had already run up the stairway, and was now licking out in an effort to reach him. He could not run down the only flight in the face of such a terrible destroyer. He knew he would be curled and twisted by the intense heat like a green leaf on a red-hot stove. To stay there two minutes longer would be the end of him.

"I am in for it," he thought, "unless I leap from the window, and I'd as soon roast as die from such a fall as that."

But he staggered toward the window, gasping for breath. When about half-way the heel of his shoe stuck in a knot-hole in the floor of the room. Instantly he dropped on his knees and felt for the hole.

"Thank God for it!" he gasped, and the next moment he thrust the nozzle into the hole, twisting it at an angle of forty-five degrees from the window, and left it there.

Then he made a break for the window and climbed out, clinging to the hose, down which he began to slide as fast as he dared to. The moment the spectators saw him they began to yell.

"There he is! There he comes! Hold hard, Burke!"

"Steady, lad!" sung out Alton, through the speaking-trumpet. "Slide down easy—steady."

Burke was a good climber, and well understood how to "shin it" up a tree or slide down a rope, and in another minute his feet touched the ground. The crowd and firemen yelled together in their joy at seeing the brave youth come out of the terrible peril alive.

"Burke, my boy!" cried Alton, almost hugging him in his great joy. "It was a close call for you that time."

"The closest I ever had," he replied.

"Are you hurt?"

"I don't know. I think I was scorched in a few places, but didn't have time to think about it."

"Just see what you have done!" cried Joe Prendergast. "You have fastened the nozzle up there, and now we can't throw any water!"

"What good can water do on a tinder box like that?" Alton asked.

"But we'll lose the nozzle!"

"Yes—better lose that than our Burke," was the cool reply.

Joe looked as though he didn't think so, and turned to the other to growl and sneer.

"They ought to put a block on that boy," he said. "He is always getting himself or the company into trouble. He had no business to go up there and monopolize the whole company's work."

The heat became so great that the firemen had to move back. A little later the hose dropped to the ground, having been severed by the fire. At first it was not known that the young hero had been instrumental in saving life in the tenement house fire, and some complained that the foremen should have ordered him down from the burning building, instead of allowed him to draw the hose up to the fourth story window. But the smoke had scarcely ceased to go up from the ruins before the truth was known. The women and children whose lives he had saved began to tell their story and sound his praises, and Redboro' had another sensation. The town paper spoke of him as the pride of the volunteer firemen. Everybody took him by the hand, and congratulated him, and men who had never taken any notice of him before now took him by the hand and called him a hero. He went back to the store and started to resume his work, but in a little while discovered that he had been burned in several places, and asked permission to go home.

The next day Burke was at the store again, and scores of young ladies came in on pretense of buying something just to get a chance to speak to the young hero. One day, about a week after the tenement house fire, Bessie Houghton and another young lady came into the store. Gus Dingly, the head salesman of the store (and who had long been regarded as a future junior partner in the house), came forward to wait on them. Bessie managed to get rid of him and have Burke attend to her wants. Dingly was furiously mad, but said nothing. He had been paying attentions to Bessie for several months, so much so that many of their friends believed that it would be a match in the near future. Nothing of a tender nature had ever passed between them, and yet he was regarded as her "steady company." From that day young Dingly, who was some ten years older than our hero, grew so jealous of the young fireman that he had great difficulty in concealing it from others. But Burke was entirely unconscious of being the cause of jealousy on the part of any one, and so went on in the even tenor of his way. One day, however, he was astonished to hear Dingly reprove him very sharply about some goods being out of place in a certain part of the store.

"Why, I didn't take them down," he replied.

"Yes, you did," persisted Dingly.

"You are mistaken—I did not."

"But I say you did—and I want you to put them up again."

Burke looked at him in amazement, and Dingly glaring back in return, asked:

"Are you going to put them up?"

"Oh, yes," and he turned to and began replacing the goods on the shelf.

When he had put up about half of them, Willie Simmons, another clerk, came from the farther end of the store, and said:

"Hello, Burke! Just wait a minute or two and I'll put them back. I didn't mean to leave them there."

"Did you take them down?" Burke asked.

"Yes, about half an hour ago."

"Mr. Dingly says you didn't," returned Burke, who knew that the head salesman was listening to what was being said.

"But I did for all that."

"I know you did," said Burke, casting a wicked look out of the corner of his eyes at Dingly. "But he insists that I did it."

"What's the matter with him? Is he off his base?"

"Too much for me. Ask me something easier."

Dingly turned red in the face as he heard the conversation, but said nothing at the time. Burke, however, was determined to have him correct his mistake, and asked Willie to go to him, and tell that he had left the goods on the counter.

"No matter," said Dingly, "let Burke put 'em up. He is getting too important around here."

When Willie repeated his words to Burke the young hero's eyes flashed. He went over to Dingly and said:

"You know now who lied about those goods. Was it you or me?"

"You had better go to your counter and attend strictly to business, or you'll get bounced," replied Dingly.

"Who lied—you or me?" Burke asked again.

"Go to your counter, sir," ordered Dingly.

"Who lied, Dingly, you or me?"

"Go to your counter, I tell you!"

"Who lied?" Burke asked again, very coolly.

"What's the matter here?" Mr. Houghton asked, coming up at the moment.

"That boy is insolent because I ordered him to place good back on the shelves," said Dingly.

"Is that all?" Burke asked.

"What's the matter, Burke?" Mr. Houghton asked.

Burke explained and brought up Willie to corroborate his story.

"And now I simply want to ask him who lied—he or I? If he doesn't answer, I will. He claims to be a man, but isn't manly enough to apologize when he has done another an-injustice."

"Mr. Houghton," said Dingly, "either he or I must leave this store. I won't stay under the same roof with him."

He was white with rage.

"Just let it drop till you get over your anger, Gus," suggested Mr. Houghton.

"No, sir. Take your choice," and he put on his hat to leave the store.

"Well, Burke, I am sorry, but——"

"Oh, that's all right, Mr. Houghton," said Burke. "I can go right over to Mr. Winthrop's and take a place. I am much obliged to you for your kindness to me. Good-by, Gus. Be a good

boy and keep your nose clean," and picking up his hat, he walked out of the store without speaking a word to anyone else.

Burke walked right over to Winthrop's store and after explaining his predicament he was immediately engaged as a clerk. When the population learned that their hero was at Winthrop's that store received all their patronage and Houghton's was empty of customers. When Houghton realized that his trade was leaving and going to Winthrop's he was furious and wrote a note of apology to Burke and ordered Dingly to deliver it. Dingly had to do as the merchant ordered and went to see Burke. But the young man refused to come back. When Houghton learned that he told Dingly his trade would be lost if he (Dingley) did not leave the store. So Dingly left, and in a few days the trade began to come back.

CHAPTER V.—The Leap for Life.

After leaving Houghton's store Gus Dingly paid a visit to several of the larger dry goods stores in Redboro', not doubting that such a well-known salesman could easily make an engagement. But the first store he entered received him coldly, the proprietor saying:

"I don't know that you could bring me any trade. Just now every woman in town seems to be down on you."

"Down on me?"

"Yes, they say you caused Burke Halliday to be discharged from Houghton's."

Dingly made no reply. He left and applied at another store, where he was told that his presence there would drive trade away. That broke him all up, and he went out to meditate on the mutability of human affairs.

"That cub has done all this," he said to himself. "He has been talking about me behind my back, and making people believe that I have done him a great wrong. He is now getting better pay than ever in his life before, while I am getting nothing at all. Where is the wrong there, I'd like to know? Who is wronged—he or I? Oh, I'll get even with him if I have to spend every dollar of my savings to do it!"

It soon became known to everybody in Redboro' that Gus Dingly had failed to secure another position in town—that the merchants were afraid to employ him, for fear of the loss of trade on account of his treatment of young Halliday. Thus matters stood when Burke called at Mr. Houghton's residence to pay his respects to old Aunt Peggy and the rest of the family. Burke spent an hour with the family—the first time in his life he was ever in such refined surroundings on a level of equality. Bessie sang and played for him, and old Aunt Peggy amused him with her quaint, motherly ways. That night a great storm came up and the rain came down in torrents. When the people went about their daily work the next morning they found the river rapidly rising. Soon it became an angry, roaring, rushing torrent, that threatened great damage to the town. By noon it was out of its banks and rushing through the lower streets, and many people began to be alarmed.

Two or three small houses, the occupants of

which had fled to other quarters, were swept away, and crowds assembled at different points to see what other houses would follow. It was at this point that the fire alarm startled everybody in the town, and men wondered if they would have to battle with two antagonistic elements at the same time. Every man of the two companies promptly responded to the call, and by the time the firemen reached their engines it was known that the fire was in one of the factories down on the river front. Down through the streets rushed the engines, and when they turned into River street the brave firemen found themselves knee-deep in water. But that did not deter them a single moment. They dashed forward and drew their engines through the water at the top of their speed.

Just as the Wide Awakes, who were again the first to reach the fire, turned on the water, they heard a scream from a window of the third floor. They looked up and saw a young girl leaning far out and shrieking for help.

"My God!" cried Jack Alton, the foreman, "I thought the girls had all escaped."

"So did I," said another fireman, "and we can't get at them."

"No, I don't see how we can."

The water had risen to the first floor of the mill. The fire had enveloped all the front of the building, and cut off both ingress and egress. While Alton and others were deliberating how to get at the poor girl they heard a splash in the water.

"There goes Burke Halliday!" cried someone in the crowd, and every eye was turned in that direction.

Sure enough, it was the young fireman who had leaped into the water.

"Come back, Burke!" called Alton, the foreman, but the young hero either did not hear or would not obey.

He swam out alongside the mill to where the water was ten feet deep, right under one of the windows on the first floor. There he began climbing up into the window, and then his object was plain to everyone present.

"Come back! come back!" cried Alton, with his trumpet. "You are too late!"

Burke disappeared through the window, and a murmur went up from the crowd that the daring young fellow would never get out of the mill alive. One, two, three minutes passed, and the suspense became painful to those who were standing about in the water that flowed through the streets. The young girl was still at the window, screaming for somebody to save her. The smoke was pouring out of every window in the mill, and under the window where she was the water was ten feet deep, making it impossible for a ladder to be placed there. She was on the point of giving up and sinking down in despair when she felt herself touched on the shoulder from behind. She wheeled around, caught hold of Burke Halliday, but did not know who he was in that dense volume of black smoke.

"Keep cool and we'll get out all right," said Burke, in very assuring tones.

"Save me—save me!" she gasped, and then sank into a swoon into his arms.

"This is bad business," said Burke, as he laid

her on his left arm. "If she had kept her wits it would have been easier for me."

He hastened to lean out of the window to get a glimpse of fresh air, as it seemed as if he would not be able to live another minute if he did not. Then he heard a great shout from below as the people caught a glimpse of him. He remembered that, and then, as the merciless flames touched him behind, he gathered the young girl tightly to his breast and leaped from the window into the raging waters below.

They struck the water with a splash. Burke held her up in the water until they came to a place where they could stand on their feet, and then Jack Alton took the girl from Burke and led her to safety. The fire was extinguished and the next day the flood began to subside. The girl whom Burke had saved was named Aggie Wayne, the daughter of a poor widow who had died two years before. Good old Aunt Peggy Bethune came to the rescue of the poor girl financially and she was soon able to go about after the awful fright she had been subject to.

Burke called on Aggie and the next time he saw Jack he told him what a nice girl she was, and that he had said that Jack had as much a part in saving her as he had himself.

CHAPTER VI.—Burke and the Stranger.

About a month after the destruction of the mill Burke was accosted on the street by an elderly man, who asked if he lived in the town.

"Yes, I think I do," was the reply.

"You know a good many people here, do you not?"

"Oh, yes—I think I do."

"Do you know of a widow with old child—a Mrs. Wayne? Her daughter is named Aggie."

"Wayne—Wayne," repeated Burke. "Yes—seems to me I do. The widow has gone away from Redboro', though."

"Gone away! Where?"

"I really don't know. She's been dead over a year."

The man started as if stung.

"Dead!" he repeated.

"Yes; she is buried over in the graveyard on the other side of the river," and Burke pointed in the direction of the Redboro' cemetery as he spoke.

The man gazed over the river in silence for a moment or two and then said:

"The daughter—what became of her?"

"Aggie is here—in a millinery shop down on Main street—and is the handsomest girl in Redboro'."

"Whose shop is she in?"

"Miss Higgins'. You'll see the name on a sign over the door as you go down the street—that is, if you can read."

"Oh, I think I can read," said the man, smiling.

"Think you can! Don't you know whether you can or not? Are you uncertain, too?"

The man laughed and asked:

"What's your name, young man?"

"Hanged if I know," replied Burke, and he turned away to go about his business.

Burke thought no more about it, and in a little while it slipped from his memory altogether. The man who had accosted him was middle-aged and well dressed. But there was a look of shrewd selfishness about him that almost any good business man would notice. He was stopping at the Redboro' House, the most prominent hotel in the busy little town, registered as Mr. Joseph Seymour. Mr. Seymour passed the millinery shop, and looked in as he did so. He saw the tall, angular Miss Higgins and young Aggie Wayne waiting on a couple of lady customers. They did not notice him, and in a little while he came by again and stopped to look at some bonnets and flowers which were displayed in the little window. Standing there, he obtained a good look at the young girl. She was neatly dressed, and was very beautiful, he thought. After a while he went away and strolled about the town, looking at the mills and factories along the river bank. Meeting with black Pete, who had wandered off from the engine-house a block or two, he asked:

"Boy, can you tell me what mills those are over there on the other side of the river?"

"Yes," answered Pete, very promptly. "Dem is de Spice Mills, an' de udder one is de Wool Mills."

The man looked over at the mills and saw that the boy had told him the truth. He then engaged him in conversation, and in a few minutes black Pete was in his glory, telling all he knew about the place to a stranger. He told about the last fire, pointing out the ruins of the mill, which could now be seen from almost any point along the river. Of course, the story of Burke's rescue of Aggie Wayne had to be told, and the man at once became interested.

"Where does this young fellow you speak of stay?" he asked.

"Up at Winthrop's store," was the reply.

"Where is it?"

Pete pointed it out to him, and he wended his way in that direction. The man did not enter the store, but contented himself with merely looking in as he passed the door. He saw Burke waiting on a farmer who was buying some dry goods, and then passed on up the street. That evening at the hotel he heard some of the young firemen talking, and again heard the story of Burke and Aggie Wayne repeated.

"It was a good thing for her," said one of the firemen.

"How so?"

"Why, it made her acquainted with old Aunt Peggy Bethune, who has never let her want for anything since. Just see how comfortable she is fixed there at Miss Higgins'."

"Yes, and I believe Jack is mashed on her."

"Is that so?"

"Yes; I've seen him with her several times."

"She is very young yet."

"Yes, and very beautiful."

"Guess Burke will go sneaking round her, too," said the other, laughing.

"Oh, he is too young for that, you know."

"Yes, he is pretty young to go sparking, but the women all pet him so that they'll soon turn his head."

"Burke has a pretty hard head."

"So he has, but the women can turn the hardest heads the world ever saw."

The two young firemen laughed, but the stranger looked grave. Long after they went away he sat there looking at vacancy, apparently absorbed in deep meditation. A week later

Mr. Seymour called at the cottage where lived the Widow Hart, with whom Aggie Wayne boarded, to ask her for room and board, saying:

"I am a stranger in Redboro', madam," and then, after a pause, added, "and am here on business that may detain me one or two months. I am not accustomed to living at hotels, though I am well able to do so. On making inquiries for a private boarding-house, I was directed to call here. I like your place, and will pay whatever sum you may ask."

Mrs. Hart was a poor woman, who had to resort to many ways and means to make both ends meet. She had no extra room vacant, and was at a loss to know what to do, when the thought occurred to her that she might be able to accommodate him if she could get Aggie to share her room with her during the time he remained and let him have the one she occupied. She told him to call again the next day, and that she might be able to make room for him. Of course Aggie consented, and the next day Mr. Joseph Seymour was received at the cottage as a boarder.

When Aggie came home in the evening she was introduced to him. He seemed to be a very agreeable sort of a man, being satisfied with everything that was done for his comfort. The window was very communicative, and in a little while he had heard the story of Aggie's rescue for the twentieth time since he landed in Redboro'. One evening Burke met Aggie going home from the store, and joined her. She was always glad to see him. He was her young hero.

"We have a new boarder at our home," she said, as they walked along the street in the gathering twilight.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"Oh, you don't know him, I guess. He is a gentleman who came here on business a few days ago. He is a very nice man, but old enough to be my father."

That was all that was said about him at the time. Burke lingered at the gate talking to the young men when Mr. Seymour came along.

"Oh, don't you know Mr. Seymour," said Aggie. "Mr. Seymour, that is Burke Halliday, whom you have heard the name of several times."

Seymour looked at him in no little surprise. He had heard so much of the young volunteer fireman that he had expected to see a different looking youth. Instantly both of them remembered their first meeting, and of the comical nature of their conversation on that occasion.

"I have met him before, sir," said Burke, smiling pleasantly.

"Yes, I believe we have," he replied.

"May I thought I heard you say you had never met Burke?" explained Aggie.

"No, you don't, but I did not know this young man was here," and he extended his hand to Burke, who shook it warmly.

"Just so," said Burke, "and I did not know you were Mr. Seymour. Do you see how uncertain everything is in this little town of ours."

"Won't you come in, Burke?" Aggie asked. "Mrs. Hart will be glad to see you, and you know how I do like to have you talk to me."

"Thanks, but I haven't time now," answered Burke, "but I may call to-morrow evening. I want to tell you something."

"What a dear, good fellow he is!" said Aggie, gazing after him as he walked off down the street.

"Why don't you set your cap for him?" Seymour asked in a jocular way.

"Oh, I would, but so many other girls in the town are after him that I don't think I could have a show. But then, you know, he is but a boy yet, and I am only a little girl."

"He has a big reputation for one so young."

"Yes, indeed. His reputation is deserved, too, for he is every inch a hero."

He escorted her into the house and retired to his room, while Aggie went into Mrs. Hart's room to lay aside her work dress.

On his way down the street after leaving Aggie Burke was in a deep study. He was puzzled about Mr. Seymour and did not seem to like the man. He went out to the firehouse after supper and heard from one of the boys there that Dingly had been making a threat that he would cowhide him (Burke) the first time he met him. Burke laughed at the threat. Before going home he told Jack Alton about his suspicions as regarded Seymour and Jack promised to keep his eye on that gentleman.

Burke started for home about ten o'clock and just as he reached Meadow Lane somebody struck him over the head with a sandbag knocking him unconscious. When he came to his head pained him so he went to a drug-store and had it bandaged up. Several of the fire-boys remembered Dingly's threat and they visited him about the matter. But he strenuously denied having had anything to do with it.

In the meantime a fever had set in and Burke was in a bad way. Aunt Peggy and the fire-boys were frequent callers at Burke's home.

CHAPTER VII.—A Wily Old Rogue's Whoing.

The doctor told them that he thought Burke would pull through all right. One day Aunt Peggy Bethune saw the mayor, and told him to offer a reward of five hundred dollars for the arrest and conviction of the assailants of the youth.

"I am not a vindictive woman," she said to the mayor, "but we want to protect the community from such criminals."

"Yes—and the best way to do it is to make the whole people go on the hunt for them by offering big rewards."

"I'll make it a thousand if you think it necessary," said Aunt Peggy.

"I think five hundred dollars are enough," replied the mayor, as he sat down to write out the notice of reward.

The big reward caused much excitement in the town. Everybody wondered who the assailant was, and what was the motive. It was a puzzle to everyone who understood of the people thinking on the matter. It was known that he had not

two enemies in Redboro', one of whom was not so much an enemy as he was envious—and they were Gus Dingly and Joe Prendergast. Joe had been so indiscreet as to speak disparagingly of him on several occasions. But having been rebuked by some of the ladies, he soon ceased doing so as a matter of policy. But Gus Dingly had threatened to cowhide him, and that naturally set the eye of suspicion gazing in his direction. After he had proved an alibi to the satisfaction of the Wide Awakes there were some people who did not hesitate to hint that Gus had probably hired some rascal to knock him on the head. Everywhere he went after that he was an object of suspicion, and many of his acquaintances gradually drew away from him.

By degrees Burke recovered, but it was at least a month ere he was able to go out of his room. By that time the excitement had dwindled down into a single question—who struck Burke Halliday? Every evening after she came home from the millinery store Aggie Wayne, accompanied by another young girl of her own age, called to inquire after him. Mr. Seymour had several times offered to go with her, but she declined his offer.

"You don't know how the girls would tease me," she said, "if they saw you going with me on the street."

"Oh, that's all the objection you have, eh?"

"Yes, sir, that's all."

"Oh, well, I guess you are right in objecting, as it is not pleasant to be teased about anything. But I assure you it would be a great pleasure to go with you anywhere."

"I didn't know that," and she blushed.

"Yes, and when I saw you walking with young Halliday I wished myself young again, that I might walk with you, too."

"Oh, as for Burke, nobody would tease me about him. All the girls want him to walk with them."

"Yes, I understand. I am too old for one so young as you."

Aggie did not know how to answer him. She never had any one to talk to her that way before.

"If they wouldn't tease me," she said, "I wouldn't mind."

"Well, they shall not tease you on my account."

"Please don't be angry with me," she said.

"Of course not. I want you to be as happy as you deserve to be. If you will only talk with me when you come in of evenings I should be ever so pleased to sit with you, and read and talk and tell you of the countries I have visited."

Aggie never had any man take so much interest in her before, and felt very much flattered at what he said.

"When I work very hard at the store," she replied, "I am afraid I am too tired to talk to anyone."

"You ought not to have to work at all, my dear young friend. You are not strong enough."

"But I am obliged to work," and she laughed softly. "I am poor, and have to eat and wear clothes just like other girls."

"Oh, you ought to marry a man who can keep you in comfort, with servants, automobiles, a fine house and all that."

"What's that he says? If you know of such a

man who will take pity on a poor little girl like me, why just send him along."

"Would you marry him even if you did not love him?" he asked, looking her full in the face.

"I—I—really don't know, sir," she answered, "but I would try very hard to love him if he was kind and good, and not too ugly."

He laughed and suggested:

"And not too old, eh?"

"Oh, if he was very old I might be a young widow some day, and very rich," and she laughed heartily.

"Yes, that's very true. I've heard of several instances of that kind. Now, listen to me, Aggie Wayne. I am old enough to be your father. I have been married once, but have been a widower for ten years, and have no children. I am very rich, and can give a wife a fine house to live in, silks and diamonds to wear, automobiles, horses and plenty of servants. But I have never thought of marrying until I met you."

"Met me!" she faltered, turning very pale.

"Yes. I have learned to love you, Aggie, for my forty-five-year-old heart is still young enough to love. If you will be my wife you shall have all that money can purchase—a fine house, silks, diamonds, carriages, servants, and everything you may want. I want you to love and pet you—to be my idol—my darling."

Aggie sat in the chair like one utterly dumfounded. She did not know what to say or think.

"I know perfectly well you do not love me," he continued, "but now that I have told you my feelings towards you, you can try to love me. Don't make any promise now—I don't want you to do that. Just take a week or ten days to think over it, and try to love me. I will be satisfied then. Will you do that, Aggie?"

"Yes," she half whispered.

"Thanks. I only want to make you happy all your life, which you can never be working as you do now for a mere pittance."

He left her then, and she ran up to her room, her head in a whirl and her young heart in a flutter. She did not love him—had never given him a thought when out of his presence. But the fact that she had received an offer of marriage was what had set her young heart to fluttering like a caged bird. It was her first offer, and so unexpected, and from a rich man, too. Surely that was enough to set a young girl's heart in a flutter, and it is not to be wondered at that Aggie was too excited to sleep any that night. The next day Aggie began to weigh the offer in her mind. She was not yet seventeen years old. Had she been ten years older she would not have hesitated a moment. But the idea of marrying a man so old as Mr. Seymour was not a pleasing one to her. But when she thought of the riches he had promised her as his wife, she wavered. Thus for two weeks she wavered and longed to have some friend upon whose advice she could rely. At last she thought of good old Peggy Bethune.

She made up her mind that it was her duty to go to her under the circumstances and seek her advice. The good-hearted old lady heard her simply story, and then asked:

"Do you love him, child?"

"No, I do not—yet I don't dislike him."

"Then don't marry him. Never give your

hand without your heart. Better to live a lonely, loveless life, my child, than to marry a man you do not love."

"That is just how I feel myself," she said, "but thought I ought to tell you about it."

"You did right, my child. There are very few girls who could resist such an offer as you have received. The right kind of a man will come along after a while. You are very young yet, and can afford to wait. Don't be hasty. A good girl and a pretty face need never go begging for a husband."

Aggie went back home with a light heart, for she was now convinced that her own heart was right all the time. She thought of the bright, manly face of Burke Halliday, and wondered if he would ever ask her to be his wife. How quickly her heart would say yes to such a question from him, though he had not a dollar in the world. A day or two later she met Mr. Seymour in the little yard between the house and the gate. He smiled and gave her his hand.

"Mr. Seymour," she said, "I am ready now to give an answer, and——"

"My dear friend," he replied, interrupting her, "I can see from your face what answer you have for me. You have not yet persuaded that heart of yours to love me. I can see that. But let me help you. See here—this is a diamond ring, worth five hundred dollars. Just see how your little hand will set it off. When you look at it on your finger it will remind you that somebody loves you, and love begets love, you know."

But she drew her hand away saying tremulously:

"You must not tempt me, Mr. Seymour. I have examined my heart thoroughly, and find that I don't love you, and——"

"But maybe you can learn to do so?"

"No. I don't think I can. One cannot say to her heart 'love this or that one,' and be obeyed. We could not be happy, and I had much rather be happy than rich."

"You seek the love of one younger than I am," said he, looking her straight in the face.

"I seek not the love of anyone. I have tried to love you because you are good and kind, but I cannot."

"Will you wear this ring for my sake?"

"No—I cannot. What would people think of a poor young girl wearing diamonds? Indeed, I cannot."

She turned and entered the house, leaving him staring after her in the little flower garden.

"She must—she shall be mine," he said in a low tone of voice, as if afraid of being heard.

"I shall not overtake her. If that young Halliday is my way he must be got out of it, that's all. I won't stand being refused by a little chit of a girl like that, and for a boy who has nothing to recommend him but a reckless indifference to life!"

CHAPTER VIII.—Aggie Wayne's Revelations.

Burke Halliday slowly recovered from his wound, and at the end of a month he was allowed to go out on the street again. The first person he noticed was Aggie Wayne. He called

on her at the millinery store, and was welcomed cordially by Miss Higgins and the pretty orphan. Aggie was joyous in her reception of him. They left the store together, as Burke signified his intention of walking home with her. Aggie told him all about Mr. Seymour's offer of marriage, and his wanting to give her diamonds, but said she would not marry him, as she preferred to be happy than rich.

"Well, well," said Burke, when she concluded. "I'm blest if I can understand it."

"Neither can I. But you won't say anything about it to anyone?"

"No; but I'll keep my eye on him, though."

"Hush! There he is now—over there talking with someone."

Burke looked across the street and caught a glimpse of Seymour and a man whom he did not remember having seen in Redboro' before. The two men, on seeing themselves observed, parted and went off in different directions. Burke gazed at the other man as if trying to make out where he had seen him before. He finally decided that the man was a stranger whom he had never met. In a little while the couple reached Mrs. Hart's gate, and Burke left Aggie. He went away toward his own home, and Aggie returned to the house and locked herself in Mrs. Hart's room. The man whom our hero had seen with Seymour passed the humble cottage of the Widow Halliday that evening, and seemed to be inspecting the premises as much as he dared to. Burke was deeply puzzled to know what it all meant, and he made up his mind to consult Jack Alton about it the next day. He retired at an early hour and soon fell asleep. But some time after midnight he awoke, and lay there thinking about Aggie Wayne and the offer of marriage she had received. An hour passed, during which time he tried to vain to sleep again.

Suddenly he thought he heard something at the window in his little room. He looked and listened. The sound was repeated, and he crept softly out of bed to make an investigation. Going to the window and looking out, he saw the figure of a man on the outside. His head and shoulders came up to the window sill. Burke was astounded. He knew that no one would dare to trespass on the home of a family as near as the Hallidays. It must be that mischief to some one was the motive. There was no woman in the room save a latchet which had been lying on the little shelf above the window for months. He reached up and grasped the latchet, and then stood still to await developments. The window was raised softly by the unknown person, and his head appeared into the little room. Whew! Burke caught the latchet down on the head of the man, who dropped to the ground as suddenly as if a thunderbolt had struck him.

"By George!" groaned our hero, "I hit him with the blade when I only intended to give him a tap with the hammer."

He quickly lit the lamp and held it out of the window. There lay a man whom he recognized as the one he had seen talking with Mr. Seymour.

"What does it mean!" he gasped. "I must go and call up Mr. Thompson across the street, as I can't leave the man lying here unattended."

Leaving the lamp on the little wash-stand, Burke hastily dressed and slipped out of the house softly, so as not to alarm his mother and sister. Across the street lived the Thompsons, who were the friends of the Hallidays. He hastened to arouse Mr. Thompson.

"What's the matter, Burke?" Thompson asked, on recognizing the voice of our hero.

"Please come over as quick as you can. I am afraid I have killed a man who was trying to break into the house."

Thompson was fully five minutes in dressing and getting ready to go with the young hero. As soon as he came out they hastened across the street to the cottage and went round to the end of the house to the window under which the man had fallen. The light from the lamp in Burke's room was streaming through the window. Burke reached through the window and got the lamp. But when he held it so as to enable them to look for the man they were disappointed at finding that he had gone away!

CHAPTER IX.—Burke Interviews Seymour.

Burke and Thompson looked at each other like men dreaming. There on the ground was a pool of blood where the wounded man had fallen. There were blood stains also on the side of the house where the man had placed his hands in scrambling to his feet, but the man had disappeared. In the morning the police were notified, but nothing was found of the wounded man. Burke was overwhelmed with questions, but would not say that he had any suspicions as to who the man was. He made up his mind, though, to speak to Mr. Seymour about it. Before going to see Seymour he called on Jack Alton and borrowed a revolver from him.

"If you get a chance at the fellow, Burke, let him have every bullet in the gun."

The second day after the midnight incident at the Halliday cottage Burke walked home with Aggie Wayne, and stood talking with her at the gate till he saw Mr. Seymour coming down the street.

"Well, good-by, Aggie," he said, shaking hands with her. "I'll see you in a day or two again."

Aggie ran into the house, very anxious to keep out of Seymour's way since she had rejected his suit. Burke went up the street to meet him, and was greeted pleasantly by him when they met.

"Have you found any clue to your visitor of the other night?" Seymour asked.

"Just a little one," replied Burke. "I saw you talking to the man who I knocked on the head at about the very evening of the occurrence. Aggie Wayne saw you also, though she does not know that it was the same man who pulled me a visit."

"And I knew to whom you allude now. I was walking along over there on the other side of the street when a stranger, whom I had never before seen, stopped to inquire about a hotel in the town, just as I passed you on the street the next day after my arrival in town."

Burke looked up at him in a way that convinced Seymour that he did not believe his story, and said:

"There is also another matter which I want you to explain. When you came here you were looking for the Widow Wayne, who had been dead over a year."

"Yes."

"You are now boarding at the same house with the widow's daughter."

"Yes."

"You knew them before?"

"No. A man who knew the widow years ago gave me her name when he heard that I was coming here, and asked me to call on her."

"But you have not told Aggie that?"

"No, because she did not know the man. There was no use in my doing so."

Burke was worse puzzled than ever, though he did not believe a word of the story. He wanted to remind him of the proposal of marriage, but his promise to Aggie prevented him from doing so.

"That yarn may all be true, Mr. Seymour," he said, after a pause, "but I don't take any stock in it."

"Oh, well, I'm not offering any stock for investment. They ought to elect you Grand Inquisitor of the town, to find out the business of every man who comes to this place."

"If they did I'd soon find out all about your friend in short order," retorted Burke.

"My friend?"

"Yes, your friend, who came to me to get his head chopped!"

Seymour reached for his revolver, and Burke drew his first, hissing:

"I've got the drop on you!"

When Seymour saw that the younger fellow had the drop on him with a revolver, he promptly put up his own weapon, and remarked:

"There's no use in having a fight about a matter that does not concern me."

"Of course not," sneered Burke—"not as long as I have the drop on you, at any rate."

"Well, you go your way and I'll go mine," returned Seymour.

"My way is to follow up the man who tried to kill me," said Burke, "and I have traced him up to where I saw him talking to you."

"And I have told you all I know about him. You know very well that I once accosted you on the street in the same way. What do I know or care about you that I should have an interest in you dead or alive?"

Burke could not say as much as he wanted to, as a number of people were passing down on the other side of the street every minute of time. He was bound by his promise to Aggie Wayne not to mention anything she had told him, as regard to Seymour, and having the best of the argument he refused his argument, and with a self-satisfied smile, turned and walked toward the gate of the Hart cottage. Burke walked slowly down the street toward his home, thinking over what had occurred, wondering what the mystery was that overshadowed him.

"There's something wrong, as sure as my name is Burke Halliday," he muttered to himself, "and I want to get at the bottom of it. I don't know but two men who have anything against me—Dingy and Prellinger—and I don't believe either of them would want me killed. Why should

that fellow, a perfect stranger in Redboro', want to do me any harm? Hanged if I ain't puzzled to know what to think of it. I'll tell Jack all about it, and see what he thinks of it."

When Burke reached his home he sat down on his little piazza and began to think over his conversation with Seymour. Mamie came to the door and said that supper was ready, and he went in to join her and his mother. Mrs. Halliday asked him if he had found out anything about the unknown visitor.

"Not a thing, mother," he replied.

"It is very strange, isn't it?"

"Yes, indeed. It puzzles me to understand how a man, covered with blood as he was, could get away without somebody seeing him."

"It was midnight, you know," suggested his mother.

"Very true, but daylight came, too, and he had to wash up and change his clothes, if he had any to change with, and have his wound dressed. It seems to me that somebody must have found out something about it."

"Yes, it would seem so."

"Well, we may get at the bottom of it yet," remarked Burke. "I am on the lookout. I'd know the fellow if I saw him again."

That night Burke slipped out of the house and went over to see Aggie Wayne. He wanted to ask her to let him tell Jack Alton about Seymour's offer of marriage to her. He found Seymour talking to Mrs. Hart when he went in.

"Is Aggie at home, Mrs. Hart?" he asked, on entering the room.

"Yes, I believe she is," said the landlady. "Shall I call her?"

"Yes, I would like to see her."

"Well, take a seat, and I'll call her."

Burke seated himself and Mrs. Hart left the room. Seymour looked at him with a very serious expression of countenance.

"Halliday," he said, "I've a proposition to make to you, which, if you will accept it, will pay you a thousand dollars a year and your traveling expenses."

Burke was astonished, but was not to be caught.

"I don't want to have anything to do with you," he said. "You don't like me, and I am not in love with you, so it's better for us to keep away from each other."

Just then Mrs. Hart returned to the room and said:

"Aggie will see you in the dining-room, Burke."

"Thank," and he arose and left the room without speaking again to Seymour.

Aggie was both glad and surprised to see him. She was all smiles, and asked:

"What in the world brought you out to-night, Burke?"

"Why, you did," he replied.

"Well, I am honored indeed."

"Of course you are, and so am I. The truth is, I want to tell Jack Alton what you told me about that old chap in the parlor, and you must let me do it."

"What do you wish to tell him?"

"Burke, he may be able to unravel the mystery of his conduct toward you."

"I don't think there is any use of that," she said. "I have declined his offer, and that is the end of it."

"But you told me that he would not take no for an answer."

"Well, I guess he'll make up his mind to do so after a while," and a very determined look came into her eyes as she spoke.

"You won't let me tell him, then?"

"No—not now, Burke."

"Well, that's all," and he started to leave.

"You are not angry with me?" she asked.

"No—of course not."

"Then sit down and talk to me. Tell me how you feel about your last adventure."

"I am feeling well enough, and expect to go to work to-morrow or next day."

"You may do wrong to go to work so soon."

"I don't think so. I can't afford to lose any more time."

"I'd wait another week, anyhow."

"I cannot afford it."

After nearly an hour's talk with her, Burke took leave of her and returned to his humble home, and left the young orphan to return to her room.

That night there was another alarm of fire. It was in an old frame building and a piercing yell came from within. Burke was soon in the building and soon came out carrying a man. As he placed him on the ground and the light shone in his face he exclaimed:

"Great Cæsar! The man I chopped with a hatchet!"

"Send for a surgeon," said Alton. "He seems to be in a bad way!"

A doctor came and the man was taken to a drugstore. There he was examined and the wound from the hatchet was found on his head, and it had been very badly dressed. The doctor worked a long time trying to bring the man back to consciousness, but it seemed useless.

In the meantime Burke called at the Hart cottage to see Seymour.

When Seymour came in Burke told him there was a man down at Smith's drugstore who wanted to see him. That he had been taken out of a burning building the night before. Seymour gasped out:

"Is he dying?"

"The doctor thinks so."

"Well, I'll go," said Seymour.

In a little while Seymour and Burke departed for the drug store.

CHAPTER X.—Burke's Dodge to Entrap Seymour.

Out on the street, Burke waited as fast as he could with Seymour by his side.

"What does he say?" Seymour asked, his face all attention and a wild look in his eyes.

"Nothing at all. He is unconscious and has been all the time. I called to satisfy myself that you did know him. I am satisfied. I have two witnesses to the fact that you nearly fainted when I told you the man wanted to see you."

Seymour was in a rage. His color came back, and he ground his teeth, as he muttered:

"I had forgotten your madness of the other day, but this I will neither forgive or forget. I shall have my revenge, Burke Halliday," and he turned to go back to the house which he had just left without his breakfast.

to help that lady and her two children out of the way of that horse?"

"Hanged if I know," he replied. "A man up the street gave it to me, saying that a friend had sent me a present, and advised me to take it home and look at it. I thought there was a small clock in it, as I could hear it ticking as I held it up to my ear. I dropped it when I ran to help that lady, and would like to find it."

"Well, I guess you'll never find it again."

"Why? Who took it?"

"Nobody. I was sitting on my piazza over there, and saw you when you dropped it. I was looking at it when the horse struck it with his forefoot. It exploded, killed the horse, splintered the buggy, and played the mischief generally."

"Good Lord!" gasped Burke.

"Didn't you know it was loaded?"

"No. If I hadn't dropped it, it would have killed me. I would have been blown to atoms, and no one would have ever known what did it."

Burke was sick at the idea of the peril he had been placed in, and leaned against one of the shade trees that lined the street on either side. By this time a score or more of people had crowded around our hero and the man who had been an eye-witness of the explosion, and the story had to be repeated several times. Gus Dingly was taken up and carried to his home, bleeding from several wounds and still unconscious. That night Gus Dingly recovered consciousness, and said that he saw Burke Halliday throw an explosive under his horse which blew up the whole turnout. Those who heard it were amazed. Everybody knew that Burke and Gus were enemies. That fact alone made everything look suspicious.

A justice of the peace was sent for. He came, and on the charge made by Gus issued a warrant for the arrest of Burke. The constable was a relative of the Dinglys, and he hastened to make the arrest in as insolent a manner as possible. When he reached the cottage, Jack Alton and several other firemen were there. He entered without knocking at the door, and seizing Burke by the collar, said:

"I want you, you young murderer!"

Jack sprang to his feet, and clutching him by the throat, hissed:

"Hands off the lad, or I'll murder you!"

"I've got a warrant for him," said the constable.

The constable then showed his warrant.

"Why didn't you wait till morning to arrest him?" Alton asked.

"That's none of your business."

"It isn't, eh? We'll see! Get out of here! You'll find Burke at the engine-house to-morrow morning. Come on, Burke, we'll stay with you at the engine-house till morning."

The constable left in a hurry to report to the justice, while Burke went with his friends to the engine-house of the Wide Awake Fire Company.

CHAPTER XI.—Mr. Seymour Gives Up and Leaves the Field.

The justice was so indignant at having his warrant defied that he called on the sheriff to make the arrest. That officer went to the engine-

house to look for Burke, accompanied by the constable and the justice himself. They found about a dozen firemen there with their red shirts on, keeping company with the young hero. It took about three minutes to convince the sheriff that it would be better policy to defer making the arrest till the next morning. He had had enough of the firemen, and didn't want any more. The Wide Awakes made a night of it. A restaurant nearby supplied them with hot coffee and sandwiches.

When morning came they marched out to breakfast, ate heartily, and then waited for the justice's court to open. Two hours later a dozen substantial citizens hastened to the justice's courtroom to offer bail for the young fireman. The preliminary hearing resulted in bail to a moderate amount being fixed. It was promptly furnished by Mr. Houghton, the father of Bessie Houghton, and Burke was allowed to go. As may well be supposed, the town of Redboro' was in a fever of excitement during all this time, and all sorts of rumors floated about. One never knew what to believe. It now seemed that Burke would have to stand trial for an alleged attempt on the life of Gus Dingly. The firemen clubbed together and hired the best lawyers that could be found to defend him. Witnesses kept coming forward to tell him what they knew about the explosion, and in less than two days three reputable citizens said they saw the whole business—that his gallant rescue of the lady and her two children was the sole cause of his dropping the package which turned out to be an infernal machine, designed for his own destruction. Then two ladies said they saw him receive the package from the stranger.

His lawyer told him that he was in no danger whatever from the suit, and that he would be acquitted by the jury without leaving their seats. Gus Dingly was badly hurt by the explosion, and laid in bed nearly two weeks. He was very bitter against the young fireman, saying that it was a daring attempt on his part to kill him. But who was the man that gave him the machine? Burke had a description of him printed, and the description given by the two ladies who saw the man give him the machine tallied exactly with his. The description of the man was sent everywhere and to New York City, supposing that he may have escaped to the city. But days passed and still nothing was heard of the stranger, and Burke resumed his work in the store. One evening, at the boarding-house, Seymour joined Aggie in the parlor, and said:

"I am going away soon, Aggie."

"Why, where are you going, Mr. Seymour?"

"Back to New York. My business is nearly through here. But do you know that I am not yet able to make up my mind to give you up, Aggie?"

"I am sorry for that, Mr. Seymour," she said, "for you must make up your mind to do so in the end. I can never be your wife."

"Is that your final answer, Aggie?" he said.

"Yes, sir. I have made up my mind, and nothing on earth can change it."

"Well, my happiness is ruined forever. I know that I have no right to alter your decision—perhaps no right to expect you to love me. But, as you said weeks ago, one cannot control his

or her affections. I love you better than my soul—better than all my riches, and I shall go away leaving my heart with you. We may never meet again, Aggie. Will you let me leave with you a memento of my love?" and he drew the superb diamond ring he had once before offered her, and slipped it on her finger.

Aggie gazed at the magnificent jewel and turned pale.

"No—no! A poor girl can't wear such a jewel as that!"

And she quickly drew it off and held it out for him to take again.

"Keep it, even though you do not wear it," he said. "I only ask that you do not let it pass out of your possession as long as you live. Whenever you look upon it you will be sure to remember me. I shall not be entirely forgotten. Good-by now; I shall not see you in the morning," and he held out his hand to her.

She gave him her hand and said:

"Good-by, Mr. Seymour. I hope you may forget me in the love of one who can return your affection."

"I shall never love again," he said, and, giving her a nervous shake of the hand, he turned away and went to his room.

The next day she left the house after an early breakfast, and was at the store before he was out of bed. During the day Seymour paid his bill, made Mrs. Hart a handsome present, and left, going to the railroad station in a carriage which he had ordered the day before. The next day after he left a well-dressed woman came into the millinery store to make some purchases, and, in the course of conversation said:

"I am stopping at the Redboro' House, but I'd rather live at a private boarding-house, and as I am obliged to remain here a fortnight, I'll pay well for room and board in a quiet place."

"My landlady has a vacant room," said Aggie, "which might suit you."

"Where is it?"

"Down Main street. Anyone can tell you which is Mrs. Hart's house."

"I am ever so much obliged to you," said the woman. "I shall ride down there and see for myself."

She left the store and went out to a carriage which stood in front of the place. When Aggie went home that evening Mrs. Hart was in a smiling good humor. She had secured a new boarder who had paid her as much for a week as the others usually paid in a month. Mrs. Hart's new boarder was a young man—nearly twenty years of age—who proved to be very pleasant company indeed. She played and sang, and made the house lively. There was no end of sweetmeats of every kind, and a variety of delicious fruit. One day, about a week after the arrival of the new boarder, a carriage drove up to the door of Mrs. Hart's house. Mrs. Hart went out to greet it, but to her surprise she found her new boarder coming out.

"I am going to take a ride through your lovely hills this afternoon," said the young man, "and would like to have you accompany me."

"I have just no time in getting ready for my ride," said Mrs. Hart, "but I will be ready in the double-

trouble sea of her life, and she felt truly grateful to her generous-hearted boarder for the treat. Just as Aggie was leaving the store the carriage stopped there, and Mrs. Hart's cheery voice called out to her:

"Aggie! Child! Come ride with us."

The young girl stopped and gazed at her in astonishment.

"Why, Mrs. Hart!" she exclaimed.

"Come. Get in and ride home with us," said the new boarder, making room for her as the coachman held open the door.

Aggie could not recollect that she had ever ridden in a carriage in all her life. It had long been a dream of hers to ride in a fine carriage and look to the right and left at the houses, trees, gardens, green fields, and feel as happy as the birds. She uttered a cry of joy and sprang into the carriage.

"Oh, this is glorious!" she cried, leaning back in the soft-cushioned seat. "I did not dream of such a delicious ride as this."

"I am glad you enjoy it," remarked the lady. "If you wish it we will ride down the river road a couple of miles."

"Oh, I would like it ever so much!" she replied.

But Mrs. Hart shook her head.

"You will have to go without me," she said. "I must get out and see about supper, for I know you will be hungry enough after your ride."

"Well, we'll be back just in time to enjoy the supper," replied the lady, as the carriage stopped in front of the house to let Mrs. Hart get out. The long drive down the river road was not one, not a confirmed dyspeptic, could not have failed to enjoy. Aggie was delighted beyond measure, and thanked her generous friend a dozen times during the ride. On the way back Aggie saw Burke Halliday returning to his home from the store.

"Oh, there's Burke," she exclaimed.

"Who's Burke?" her companion asked.

"Why, Burke Halliday, the brave young fireman you have heard us all talking about so much. There he is."

She waved her hand to the young hero. Burke lifted his hat and bowed. The lady looked back at Burke, and saw him standing where he stopped on recognizing Aggie in the carriage.

"I am sorry we did not ask him to ride with us," she said, "as I should like to see him and make his acquaintance."

"Oh, he is one of the best fellows in the world," said Aggie, quite certain of the opinion of the young hero.

"You like him very much, do you?" the lady asked.

Aggie blushed and looked away.

"That tell-tale blush," exclaimed the lady, "answers the question. Well, I am not surprised at it. He saved your life at the risk of his own, and the reward of such a noble deed should be love come in and—"

"Burke has never uttered a word of love to any girl yet," said Aggie, suddenly turning and facing her companion. "He is nothing but a boy yet."

"Yes—yes, I know that, and yet he seems to be every inch a man. He is indeed a hero, and no young girl can be blamed for falling in love with him."

"Were I to know him at your age I would certainly fall in love with him, too."

"Of course you would," laughed Aggie. "All the girls in Redboro' like Burke. He is kind to everybody, and is so brave."

By this time the carriage returned to the Hart cottage, where Aggie and the lady left it and entered the house. The coachman drove away, and Aggie asked of her companion:

"Is that your carriage?"

"Yes, dear."

"How rich you must be!"

"I am rich enough to be able to live without care," was the reply. "And yet I was once as poor as you are, my child."

Aggie opened wide her eyes.

"How did you get rich?" the young girl asked, as they entered the lady's room.

"I was a shop girl in New York," answered the other, "and one of the owners of the shop took a fancy to me. He was old enough to be my grandfather, but was very rich and kind and good, and so I married him. I now own the shop, and several big stores besides."

Aggie looked at her in astonishment.

"Did you love him?" she asked.

"No—of course not. I married him for his money, and I got it. I am happy now as the happiest. I tell you, child, that riches go a long way in this world toward making life worth living."

Aggie had something to think about that night, and it may well be supposed that she did more thinking than sleeping. Here was a woman happy in the possession of everything that heart could desire, who had taken an offer similar to the one she had rejected. Which of the two was the happier? When she came down to breakfast the next morning she was smiling and happy, and her greeting to Mrs. Hart and the new boarder was that of a bright, sunny-hearted young girl. When she was leaving the breakfast table the new boarder said to her:

"We shall have another ride to-morrow if you can go."

"Oh, I can go well enough," she replied; "Miss Higgins is very kind to me."

Aggie left the house and hurried on her way to the store. She had gone about two blocks when a voice behind her said:

"Notice us poor fellows any more."

"Oh, Burke!" she cried, wheeling around and grasping the young fireman's hand. "I had such a glorious ride yesterday! How I did wish you were with us!"

"You did seem to enjoy it," he replied. "Whose carriage was it?"

"The lady who boards at Mrs. Hart's. She was once a poor shop girl like me, but married a rich man, and now she owns everything. I don't know how it happened, but I wish I could wish it."

"I don't know," he replied. "When a person has money, I don't think it is hard to be happy all the time."

"Yes, I wish so, too. I wish I could be rich and have all the money I want."

"I wish I could be rich and have all the money I want," he said. "I wish I could be rich and have all the money I want."

CHAPTER XII.—Burke Get a Clue to a Mystery

All day long Aggie Wayne was thinking about her promised ride. That evening when she returned home she told her generous friend that Miss Higgins had kindly given her permission to go at the time suggested. The evening was spent in conversation, and at the usual hour they all retired. When the occupants of the upper part of the house awoke they were nearly strangled with smoke. The kitchen had taken fire, and the lower portion was in flames ere anyone was aware of it. Then came wild, piercing screams for help from the female portion of the household. The engines came up at full speed, and in another minute the firemen had the ladders up to the windows. Burke came in first, with Alton behind him.

"Burke—Burke! save me!" cried Aggie, running wildly around the room, blinded by the smoke.

"Here I am, Aggie!" cried Burke. "Where are you?"

She uttered a cry of joy, and rushed in the direction of his voice. He caught her in his arms and bore her to the window. To climb out and bear her down to safety was the work of but a couple of minutes more. She was in her night-dress, just as she sprang out of bed, and had fainted from excitement. Burke hastily rushed over to the next house with her, and gave her in charge of one of the neighbors. Jack Alton brought down Mrs. Hart, who was much heavier than Aggie, and not so easily handled. She, too, barely escaped in her night-dress. Just as Jack reached the ground with Mrs. Hart, Burke heard a series of piercing shrieks in another room. He sprang up the ladder with the nimbleness of a squirrel, and disappeared through the window. The screams came from another room, and he threw himself against the door with all the force his weight could give. The door flew open, and he staggered into the room.

"Save me! Save me!" cried a lady, rushing into the room.

Burke caught her, but found that she was much heavier than himself, and thought that if she swooned he would never be able to get her out. His presence and assistance partially quieted her excitement.

"My shoes! My shoes!" she exclaimed, as he tried to lead her out of the room. His hands touched them. One had a package of something in it, which he mechanically thrust into his pocket.

"Come, I have your shoes!" and he dragged her out of the room by main force. At the window he climbed out and drew her after him. She was too heavy for him to handle, and Jack Alton ran up to his assistance.

"Give her to me, lad!" said the foreman, taking the half-fainting woman in his arms.

Burke slid down the ladder, still holding to the woman's shoes. The great crowd of spectators joined themselves hoarse cheering him. Alton landed with his burden a moment or two later, when Burke said to her:

"Here are your shoes. Put them on or you will be frozen."

He knelt down and placed the shoes on her

feet, and then led her away over to the house where Mrs. Hart and Aggie Wayne had been carried. Burke went back to the scene of conflagration and worked nobly to save as much of the property as possible. But the flames had made such headway ere they were discovered that little of value was saved. Aggie and Mrs. Hart were given some dresses to wear the next morning. Good old Aunt Peggy Bethune came to their assistance with everything they needed. The fire over, the Wide Awakes returned to their quarters, where Jack and Burke were congratulated by their comrades on their gallant exploits that evening. Neither of them had received any injuries, which was a miracle under the circumstances, and they congratulated each other heartily on that score.

It was a little after midnight when the fire broke out, and it was nearly daylight when the brave firemen went home to snatch an hour or two of sleep before going to business or work. On retiring to his room Burke threw off his clothes very quickly, and in doing so he heard something drop on the floor. Looking down to see what it was, he found a small package which he recollected having found in one of the shoes belonging to Mrs. Hart's lady boarder, when he took them out of the burning building. It was a small notebook containing a few letters and memoranda. He was about to place the package on the little table to remain till morning, when he would restore them to their owner, when he saw his own name written in the letter that was exposed just below the edge of the notebook. He drew out the letter, only to find that a portion of it was missing, so that he could not find either date or signature. What he did find, however, knocked all the sleep he was so anxious to get out of him.

"You will have to use considerable tact," the letter read, "to avoid arousing the suspicions of a young fireman named Burke Halliday. He is yet a boy, but he was so fortunate as to save her life there one day, which exploit made him the hero of the town. I think but for her liking for him she would have accepted my suit, and I think he became jealous of me. If you can succeed in getting her out of the town and in our power she could easily be persuaded to become my wife, in which event your fortune as well as mine would be made, and then, she being in——"

Here the torn part of the letter abruptly ended the communication.

"What in thunder does this mean?" Burke asked himself, as he turned the torn letter over and over again. "It means Aggie Wayne," he muttered, "though it does not mention her name. She is the one who was rescued, and—why, hang it, I believe that old Seymour wrote that! He speaks of a suit, and I know that he did propose to her. Now he has gone away, and this woman is here to steal her away so he can have a chance to force her to marry him. The old rascal! Well, I'll see about that. But what does he want to marry a poor girl like Aggie Wayne for? Ah, he says that his fortune would be made then. How would her marriage to him make his fortune? That's what I'd just like to know. And I'm going to find it out! Oh, what a sly puss that woman is!"

He read the others, but could gather no light

from them. They were all in the same handwriting. He placed the little notebook in his pocket again, and then lay down on the bed in the hope of being able to get some sleep. But his mind was in such a whirl that no sleep came to him.

CHAPTER XIII.—Burke Meets the New Boarder.

Burke ate his breakfast that morning in silence and then went to the store where he was employed, and proceeded to work as usual. Mr. Winthrop, the proprietor of the store, saw him, and surmised that he had not slept much the night before.

"You slept very little last night, I see," said the merchant.

"Yes, sir—not more than an hour at the most."

"Just what I thought. You had better go home and sleep till noon. One can't do much business unless he gets plenty of sleep."

Burke looked up at the kind-hearted merchant and asked:

"Do you think you can spare me?"

"Oh, yes. Don't worry about that. The main business of the day is done in the afternoon."

"Thank you, sir," said Burke, and a few minutes later he left the store and returned home, where he slept about three hours.

"Thank you, sir," said Burke, and a few minutes later he left the store and returned home, where he slept about three hours.

Then he woke up and went to see Jack Alton, with the intention of telling him about the discoveries he had made in regard to Aggie Wayne and the new danger that threatened her. But Jack was too busy for him to talk then, and he went away, going up the street to the scene of the fire. From the ruins he went over to the neighbor's house where the three ladies who had been saved from the flames were domiciled for the present. The first to greet him was good old Peggy Bethune, who caught him in her arms and called him her boy—her pet. Bessie Houghton was there. She had come to bring some of her dresses to Aggie. She greeted Burke with such cordiality as to make him blush.

"Miss Bessie," he said, "you are doing as much as I did. You gave her clothes. A girl cannot live without clothes—hence you have saved her life, too."

Just then the door opened, and Aggie, dressed better than Burke had ever seen her before, entered the room.

"Oh, Burke!" she cried, and flew toward him, and was clasped in his arms.

"I am so glad to see you unhurt," he replied. "How handsome you look in that dress!"

"Ah! but for dear, sweet Bessie I would have nothing to put on. Everything I had in the world was lost last night."

"Well, don't worry about that, dear," he said, in a fatherly sort of way. "The Wide Awakes will be a father to you. They are already talking about adopting you as their daughter."

"Oh, what a beautiful idea!" exclaimed Bessie, clapping her hands.

The door opened again, and Mrs. Hart and her new boarder entered the room. The two women

hugged and kissed the young hero till he was disgusted.

"I am a sound sleeper," said the lady, "and am hard to wake when once asleep. I was nearly strangled when I opened my eyes. I sprang out of bed and screamed at the top of my voice. The next thing I knew I heard Burke's voice telling me to keep cool. Then my night-dress flamed up and I thought my time had come. He put the fire out and threw another over my head. How I managed to get my arms in the sleeves I don't know. But I did—and he even secured my shoes for me—my purse and diamonds were in the pocket of the dress. Was ever a man so thoughtful?"

There was no doubt of the gratitude of the lady. She showed it in every way that she appreciated the situation. Burke remained with them a half hour, and then went away, after learning that Aggie would accompany Bessie to her home and remain a week with her, till another hiding-house could be found. Out on the street Burke exclaimed to himself:

"She will be safe with the Houghtons. I'll see her there, and tell her to beware of that woman. She will not fail to believe me, I know. She is a good girl, and that old rascal of a woman will not have her if she does not want him!"

Burke settled down into the old order of things again in a day or two, and our hero gave himself up to the task of trying to unravel the mystery of the letter he had found in the shoe of the woman he had rescued from the flames. At last he made up his mind to take Jack Alton into his confidence and tell him all about it. He began by telling Jack of his first meeting with Seymour and of the latter's inquiry about the widow Wayne and her daughter. Then he spoke of his suspicions when he found that the same man who had secured board in the same house with Aggie; and of the coming of the strange woman.

"And you know," he added, "that the man I saw on the hill with the hatchet was seen talking with him on the very evening of the night of the difficulty?"

"Well, here's something else I've found out," said Jack, showing the torn letter he had found in the woman's shoe. "I found this in a small memorandum-book in the lady's shoe on the night of the fire. It is torn, having neither date nor signature. You can read it for yourself," and he handed the letter to Alton, who read it carefully.

"There's some mystery about this," he said, "there's some mystery about it. The girl is in danger. We must look out for her."

"I will see how we can well do that. I am in the shop all day, and you are in the shop."

"I will get a watch for you."

"Who are we get?"

"Black Pete would be the best one we could find, but we can't spare him from the engine."

"No, but I think I know just the boy to do that."

"Billy Thompson?"

"Well, send Billy and let him be watching the Houghtons or the Higgins' house when Aggie is

there. Give him fifty cents a day, and make him keep his mouth shut about the business."

Jack then handed Burke a five-dollar note and told him to pay the boy out of that.

CHAPTER XIV.—Conclusion.

Burke took the money and thanked his friend for it, and went out in search of the boy he wanted to put on guard. It didn't take him long to find him, and in a little while he was engaged in letting him into what he wanted him to do.

"Will you do it for half a dollar a day, Billy?" he asked.

"Yes, in course I will."

Billy took the money and thought himself rich, and went to work at once to keep an eye on pretty Aggie Wayne. Burke then went to the owner of the store and said:

"Mr. Winthrop, I am expecting at any moment to have to follow up a clue to a deep mystery that concerns me very much. I have a boy on the lookout all the time, and when he brings me word that a certain thing is being done I want your horse and carriage on short notice. Can you let me have it?"

"Yes, Burke, if it is not in use at the time."

"In that case I will go to the livery stable for a team."

"Do you want to pursue any one?"

"I wish to follow another carriage."

"Well, you might be an hour in getting a carriage. Why not have a horse saddled and kept in readiness to go at a moment's warning?"

Burke hadn't thought of that. When he spoke to Jack that big-hearted fellow went to the livery stable and engaged two good saddle-horses to be kept in readiness for instant use till further notice. Burke was at his post the next morning, and worked along till late in the afternoon, when Billy came hurriedly into the store, and whispered:

"They're goin', Burke."

"How many?"

"Just the two and the driver."

"Come, Jack," he called.

Jack washed his face and hands and threw on his street clothes, and in another minute was in the saddle.

"Which way did they go?" he asked.

"That way," and he pointed with his finger.

They rode about a mile, and caught a glimpse of the carriage ahead. An hour later it stopped in front of a country tavern for a few minutes, when a man came out with a valise in his hand and entered the carriage, after which it resumed the journey.

"Ah, that was Seymour, I'm quite certain," said Burke.

"Yes—I think so, too. We'll turn stage robber and see what it all means."

"Stage robber?"

"Yes; we'll ride up and level our revolvers at the driver's head and compel him to halt."

They waited till they reached a point about a mile beyond the tavern, when they put spurs to their horses and dashed up to the carriage at full speed.

"Halt!" cried Jack, very sternly, leveling his pistol at the coachman's head.

"Don't shoot! Whoa!"

At that a woman inside began to scream. But only one. A man put his head out of the window and said:

"Gentlemen, we have a very sick daughter in the carriage. Here's my watch and purse. Take them, and let us pass!"

"Oh, we can't take your word for that," said Jack. "We must seach you for all you are worth. But stay where you are for a moment."

Jack then ordered the driver to get down from the box. He did so, and submitted himself to be tied hard and fast. Then Burke secured the horses, and made everything safe against accidents.

"Now you may get out, sir," said Jack to the man in the carriage. He obeyed without a word, and was bound as the coachman had been. Burke struck a match, and held it up so that the faces of both could be seen. Seymour recognized the bold young fireman at a glance, and turned as pale as death.

"Burke Halliday!" he gasped.

"Yes, I am Burke Halliday," said our hero. "I told you I would catch up with you some day, and here I am. You threw me off the scent very nicely, but a little accident gave me a clue to the whole racket."

The woman in the coach sprang out of the vehicle, and running up to Burke, exclaimed:

"Oh, Burke, you saved my life once, and I know you will do it again!"

"That depends, ma'am. If Aggie says so I'll go my best on it! But I want to see what she says first."

"She is asleep in the carriage."

"That is not natural," said Jack, going to the carriage and holding a lighted match inside.

"Aggie! Aggie!" he called.

She did not answer.

"Mr. Seymour," said Burke, "you have got to explain all this, or I'll blow out your brains where you stand!" and he cocked his revolver.

"You can't frighten me," said the man, with dogged determination.

"I like a brave man," said Jack, "and we'll see whether you are one or not. Get the lines off those horses, Burke!"

In two minutes Burke had the lines off, and the bold fireman was adjusting the end of it around the villain's neck. The woman begged and pleaded for mercy.

"Keep quiet, ma'am," said Jack, "or we may serve you the same way. If he tells the truth about this business we will let him off; otherwise we'll hang him till he's dead as sure as there is life enough in that limb to hold him up."

A stone at one end of the line enabled our hero to cast it over the limb.

"Ready now! What have you to say, Mr. Seymour?" Jack asked.

"I've nothing to tell you. Hang me if you want to."

"With pleasure," and they began to pull him up.

As his feet left the ground the woman screamed and fell to the ground in a faint. He squirmed in the agonies of suffocation for a minute or so, and then they let him down.

"How now?" asked Jack. "Are you willing to stand up and tell the story?"

"What do you want to know?"

"We want to know all about this business about the attempts to get Burke out of the way and the abduction of the girl."

"I'll tell you on one condition."

"What is it?"

"That you will not let the public know it."

"I'm willing to that."

"Well, my name is Seymour. I am a Philadelphia lawyer. You'll find my professional card in my pocket on the left side. I have a good practice. A few weeks ago I was authorized by a law firm in London to hunt up a certain Mrs. Wayne and her daughter Aggie. They were wanted as the sole heirs of two million dollars, which an uncle of Mrs. Wayne had left them when he died in India. I got track of them, and made up my mind to marry the mother or daughter, and thus get hold of the money. That's all there is in the case."

"But why did you want to have me knocked over?" Burke asked.

"Because you were in my way. The girl is in love with you, and would not listen to my suit."

Burke's heart was like a sledge-hammer on hearing that. They secured all the papers bearing on the case, and then let the parties go. Aggie was carried back to the tavern and given in charge of the lady of the house. The next morning she was panic-stricken at finding herself in a strange place and among strangers. Burke and Jack went up and told her all that had happened, and showed her the London lawyer's letter.

"You are richer than mud," said Burke, grasping her hand in his and shaking it warmly, "and I am more glad than if it was myself."

"You shall have half of it, Burke," she said, "for had it not been for you I should never have lived to see it."

"Just keep it all and give me your sweet self, Aggie," said Burke. "I love you, and, and——"

"Oh, Burke!" and she threw herself into his arms.

He clasped her in his arms and kissed her.

They took her back home to Redboro', and at once secured a lawyer to look after the English estate. The trial of Burke on Dingly's charge came on a month later. Great crowds came to court to hear the evidence. But the prosecution really had no case, and the jury acquitted Burke without leaving their seats. Six months later old Aunt Peggy Bethune died suddenly. She was buried with great honor, and her will was another sensation for the good people of the town. She left the sum of ten thousand dollars to Burke Halliday as a reward for having saved her life when death by fire threatened. The balance of her fortune was left to her niece, Bessie Houghton. Bessie became doubly popular after receiving the bequest of her aunt, and every young man in the town looked longingly and lovingly at her. A few months later Aggie's lawyer informed her that her inheritance had been forwarded in drafts on New York, the estate in India having been closed up and settled. When Burke and she were nineteen years old they were married in the little church their mothers had attended, and they went on a long bridal tour to Europe before settling down in Redboro'.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BOY MUTINEERS; or, SLAVERY OR DEATH."

CURRENT NEWS

THUNDERBOLT'S PRANKS

A severe electric storm in Easton, Md., played some queer pranks in the farmhouse of Charles Adamson while he and his wife were chasing chickens to shelter. A bolt entered by the front door, moved the parlor furniture out into the kitchen, pushed all the kitchen furniture out through the back door and then went upstairs and tossed the bedroom furniture out through the windows.

A SALESROOM PRISON

So many robberies have recently been committed in New York, below the so-called "dead line," that much of the diamond buying is done in small private offices whose doors close with an ominous click. When the goods have been examined, the salesman communicates with the outside office with a buzzer, and the door is opened from the outside, for the beautiful private office was to all intents and purposes a cell.

GAS FOR RATTLESNAKES

Mustard gas, phosgene and chlorine, deadly accompaniments of war, will be turned upon large dens of rattlesnakes in the vicinity of San Marcus, Tex., within the next few weeks.

This announcement was made by Major George M. Halloran, chemical warfare officer of the 8th

Corps Area, Fort Sam Houston, who will direct the use of gases.

The experiment is to be made by special order of the Chief of Chemical Warfare, Washington.

TEST COAT OF MAIL

While the Danish Ambassador and other high officials looked on in breathless suspense, expert pistol shots peppered a Berlin policeman at will without harming him in the least. The affair was a test of the new coats of mail which have been adopted for all Berlin policemen because of the increase in crime and frequent attacks upon policemen by criminals.

The policeman target declared that he experienced only a slight shock from the bullets. The chain mail is so light that it can be worn at all times without discomfort.

CHOKES WHILE LACING SHOES

The steamship United States of the Scandinavian American line brought the body of Max Lange, 42, a salesman of 100 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn, N. Y., who had strangled to death on the way over while unlacing his shoes. Dr. Hanson, the ship's surgeon, said he believed that Lange, while bending over was seized with a fit, which caused his tight collar to choke him to death before he could straighten up. Lange had been visiting his mother in Denmark.

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The Vanishing Of Val Vane

— Or, —

THE TROUBLES OF A BOY MILLIONAIRE

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XX.

Val Finds Himself Up Against It Again.

"Go slow," replied Lorraine. "You want to remember, Mr. Dubey, that your scheme involves forgery on my part. I am not anxious to get into one of your beautiful Southern convict camps. If Val Vane is dead we are safe. If he lives he must be found and promptly removed."

"Oh, that's all right," returned Dubey. "I have two detectives searching the mountains for him at the present moment. Likely they have already found him. The chances are all in favor of the boy being dead."

If Val had been troubled about his personal appearance before he was doubly so now, for he could see that the girl was taking him all in and there was a slight suspicion of a smile on her face.

"I'm afraid I'm a pretty tough-looking subject," he ventured. "I had a hard time of it last night."

"Your coat needs sewing up," she replied. "I may be able to sew it for you when we get where we are going."

"Is it far?"

"Perhaps two miles."

"Might I ask your name?"

"I am Anna Wheelock."

"You don't speak like the mountain people I have met. Do you belong here?"

"Yes. I was born on this very mountain, but my parents sent me to an aunt in Richmond five years ago and I have been living with her ever since. My parents are now dead, but my grandfather still lives. It was on his account that I returned here some weeks ago. I was afraid he would get into trouble. He is old and blind."

"Not—not Father John?" stammered Val.

"Yes," she replied, quietly. "He is my grandfather. You know how he talks. I am not surprised at what you tell me. Indeed, I have been surprised that they have not tried to kill him before now."

"Then it is most fortunate that I met you."

"It has to be. Why did you leave the camp?"

"I did not leave it voluntarily," replied Val, and he went on to explain, expressing himself very strongly against Ralph Dubey's management of the mine.

Anna listened in silence.

"It is all you say and far worse than you know," she replied. "We are true Americans

here, but we have been practically reduced to slavery. I don't like to say it to you, Mr. Vane, but your grandfather was at the bottom of it all."

"I can well believe it," replied Val. "If all I have heard is true the miners have been shamefully abused. If ever I do really come into my own all this shall be changed."

"Grandfather says you will, and that soon," she replied, gravely adding: "and what he says usually comes true."

"How does he get this information he gives out?" asked Val.

"We Wheelocks are of Scotch extraction and the gift of second sight has been in the family for many generations. In his younger days grandfather had none of it, but after he became blind it seemed to develop and he began to talk as he does now. Not all that he prophesies comes true, but much of it does, and the hill people have come to have great faith in him. For instance, he advised against the attack made on the soldiers last night. He told them it would fail, and it did. We turn in here, Mr. Vane."

They left the road and struck into the woods by a narrow path. Anna now began to talk of other things and Val quickly discovered that he had to deal with a well-educated, sensible girl who had traveled considerably in the United States and seen in her way quite as much of the world as he had.

There was no "thrill" in Val's case, but by the time they had reached their destination he was ready to admit that here was a person who interested him more than any girl he had ever met.

Their walk ended at a clearing where stood a group of ten huts of the most primitive description. Women and children came out and stared at the, but Val saw no men until as they approached one of the huts the tall figure of the blind prophet appeared in the doorway.

"Welcome, Mr. Vane!" he called. "Anna, bring him right in. I knew you were coming. I could see you walking together under the trees. Your walk together will be a long one. I can see that, too."

This last was muttered under his breath. Val wondered what he meant. The old man's manner overawed him. Was he not blind? How then could he see? How could he have told that they were coming even if his sight had been perfect?

But here was a mystery which had puzzled wiser men than Val Vane.

"I met Mr. Vane on the road, grandfather. He has something very important to tell you," said Anna, as they approached.

"Perhaps Farther John already knows what it is," ventured Val, anxious to please the old man.

"I do not," was the reply. "There are some things I can see, but where I am personally concerned the future is always dark. Enter. I will hear what you have to say."

The interior of the hut was neatly furnished. The blind man placed chairs and told Val to be seated. Several women and children came crowding around the door. He stepped to it and ordered them away, then shutting the door he seated himself opposite Val.

(To be continued.)

NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE

CARRIES WOLF IN ARMS

Carrying a live sixty-five pound female timber wolf under his arm, Big Joe Laflamme of Gogama, Ontario, walked into the local zoo recently and delivered the animal to the keepers.

He explained that last winter he found the body of a deer partially eaten, and had set a trap in the carcass.

"When I returned," he said, "I found the deer and the trap where they had been dragged along in the snow. That wolf had done it. She had dragged half the deer for about half a mile. Then the backbone of the deer to which the trap was fastened, had broken and she dragged that for a mile. Finally the trap became tangled between the bushes and held the wolf.

"I threw some harness on her, took off the trap and soon had her pulling in my dog team."

NAVY FLYERS TO MAKE ALASKAN SURVEY

Two navy seaplanes will make an extensive survey of Alaskan territory from the air this summer, ascertaining particularly data on air bases and general coast line conditions. The seaplanes will be attached to the commission, headed by Rear Admiral Chase. They left San Diego, May 25, and will base on the Cuyama during their operations in Alaskan waters.

It is expected that information of value to conservation and development projects will be obtained from the air concerning a territory and terrain that is otherwise almost inaccessible. Photographic maps will be made and information will be gathered which will be of great value to the Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Alaskan Coal Commission.

The plan is to establish triangulation points on Baranof Island by aerial photography which may be used to plot in the territory from one coast to another. According to officials of the Coast and Geodetic Survey the work would require months of mountain climbing unless performed by fliers.

A survey of the Alaskan oil fields and seal herds will also be made. The planes that have been selected for this duty are new service DT torpedo and bombing planes and will be piloted by Lieutenants M. B. Brix and J. H. Stevens.

NATIVE METHOD OF DEALING WITH SPIRITS

Any attempts to communicate with the spirit world are dealt with summarily by the leaders among the natives in the Belgian Congo, according to the story recently told by Alexander George Mill, a Baptist missionary, who arrived on the steamship Columbia, accompanied by his wife and young daughter. The Mills have been in the Congo since 1911, working among 70,000 natives in one of the wildest corners of Africa.

"When a native discovers that a friend or a relative is acting in a strange manner and cannot attribute it to any earthly cause the matter is reported to the leaders of the tribe or village," Mr. Mill said. "The community then call a council

and decide that their fellow tribesman shall be purged of the devils and spirits. They brew a beverage from poison roots and force the suspect to drink it. This cures the native of any further communication with either the spirit or the earthly tribesmen here."

"If the native protests, he is charged with being a coward, and as this is the worst charge that can be made against a native, he usually drinks the cup without further ado. Many times I have seized the cup and thrown its contents to the ground, as it is against the Belgian law to administer the poison. The natives who give the cup are guilty of murder under the law. This has cut down the practice of the ceremony considerably, but it still persists in secret."

Mrs. Mill told of her Sunday school class of young native women who arrive for their lessons attired as nature made them. "They have no sense of prudery," she said, "and in fact are cleaner in thought and action than many who wear broadcloth and satin. They simply don't want to be hampered with clothes in that climate and are not embarrassed by the lack of garments, as that is the custom there. We have come to accept it."

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS

RADIO STATION HEARD 11,000 MILES

Announcement was made in Hartford, Conn., recently, that an amateur wireless station had succeeded in transmitting signals approximately half way around the world, establishing a new long distance record.

A ship operator reports he heard the station operated by E. W. Rouse at Galveston when he was 100 miles southeast of Ceylon in the Indian ocean, a distance of 11,000 miles.

NEW WAVE LENGTHS CAUSE TROUBLE

Broadcasting is undergoing a revolution. During the past few weeks there have been all sorts of changes in broadcasting. There have been more than a score of new stations opened. Many of the older and established stations have opened new studios, and several have changed their transmitting apparatus, says "Whit" in the Boston Post.

Now comes the new change of wave bands for almost every broadcast station in the country. Without doubt change will be a great benefit when the listening public gets thoroughly acquainted with the various station waves, but for the present the change, coming so suddenly, has left many fans unable to tune in their pet stations.

Fans will now be required to do considerable "fishing" to get stations they desire, and once they get the stations care should be taken to list the exact position on their dials so that the station can be readily picked up again when wanted.

NEW RADIO STATION

Faith in the permanence of radio broadcasting is demonstrated by the announcement of the General Electric Company that the first plant to be constructed exclusively for popular broadcasting will be erected in Oakland, Cal., to house the large Pacific Coast station of that company.

Work will be started this month on a two-story studio building, the antenna towers and the power-house. Workmen are already assembling the radio equipment. It is expected that the new station will be in the air within six months.

The transmitting set will be similar to that which is now heard almost night from WGY, Albany, N. Y. It is probable that an auxiliary studio, connected with the transmitting equipment of the station by telephone lines, will be located in San Francisco.

The Pacific Coast station of the General Electric Company will utilize remote control to broadcast radio services and musical entertainments from San Francisco and Oakland. The Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company has offered to provide land wire connection for this type of service.

FRANCE'S RADIO STATIONS

While the United States has been carrying on an extensive campaign in wireless broadcasting and the use of radio by amateurs, France has

been hard at work developing its commercial wireless business through private enterprise. To-day France has the largest, most efficient and most powerful wireless equipment in Europe. Unlike England, France took the opportunity during the war of developing this new means of communication.

To-day the French Government has four high-power stations. Most Americans are familiar with the great Eiffel Tower which rears its steel framework into the Paris sky-line like a giant finger and snatches radio messages from around the world. It is in continuous contact with Arlington, near Washington, and all the other great American stations.

Next in importance comes the station at Nantes, which is allocated to the French Navy; the station at Lyons, which was erected during the war and is used by the Post Office for communications to America, Africa, Europe and the French colonies; and the great Lafayette station, near Bordeaux, which was built by the American Navy and later acquired by the French Government.

The Lafayette tower sends daily communications to Madagascar, Martinique and Saigon. The Government service consists of news, propaganda and official communications.

The chief wireless installation in France is now that of Ste. Assise and consists of two stations, one for European traffic and one for world communication.

EARLY RADIO AMATEUR WORK

One of the earliest feats of amateur radio has been brought to light by the discovery of a clipping from a Minneapolis newspaper dated April 6, 1902. It was found in the effects of D. McNichol, an executive of one of the large radio corporations in New York. It reads in part:

"While experimenting with wireless telegraphy Friday evening D. McNichol, general telegraph agent of the Soo road, was startled by receiving messages from some one who was also experimenting with the system.

"The message was often broken, but letters and words come through so distinctly as to satisfy Mr. McNichol that he was at one end of a very satisfactory test. There was nothing distinct at first, and Mr. McNichol concluded that some ordinary electrical influence had caused it. But a few minutes later the instrument began again, and letters were plain. Later there was more connection to the letters, until words could be spelled. The word 'after' was the first one that came complete.

"Mr. McNichol became thoroughly aroused, and he immediately made the instrument as sensitive as possible. He placed carbon filings between the sheet plates of his condenser, but this did not help this before the message ceased.

Mr. McNichol is inclined to believe that the party sending the message was experimenting with the current sent off by wireless telegraph.

It is known that this wave will affect bells and lights. The person might have had a bell, light and transformer in the room, and by using a receiver turned the waves alternately upon all three. This would account for Mr. McNichol receiving only an occasional word. Mr. McNichol says that the message might have been sent from anywhere within a radius of twenty-five miles."

It may be doubtful if Mr. McNichol can qualify as the first radio amateur on the strength of this clipping, but he certainly has established his claim to membership in the Old Timers' Association. One thing is certain: reporters held their quaint theories of radio matters in those days, even as at the present time.

A REFILLABLE "B" BATTERY

The usual vacuum tube employed in radio reception requires the use of two batteries for its operation. There is the storage battery, which supplies current for the filament, and there is the "B" or plate battery, which furnishes energy for the plate circuit. The "B" battery should have a voltage of 22½ for detector tubes, and 45 to 100 for amplifier tubes. Generally, a "B" battery comprises a number of small dry cells connected together and encased in a cardboard container, thoroughly sealed in to insure perfect connections and to keep out moisture.

Now the great drawback with the usual type of "B" battery is that all the cells are not necessarily employed. If the battery is being used with a detector tube, only 16 or 18 volts may be required, and two, three or four cells may not be used. Yet after a while the majority of the cells are exhausted, and the unused cells must be discarded along with the used cells for the reason that they are all connected in to give a good voltage.

To obviate this waste, there has been invented a new type of "B" battery. It is made of the same cells now employed for flashlamps. The container has square compartments which take the unit cells, while brass springs or strips on the bottom of the container and also on a fiber cover which fits over the cells, make the necessary series connections. A wooden cover, finished off to match the rest of the container, is placed on top of the fiber connection board and is held in place by its nicked strap which engages with a notch at the ends of the case. The cover slides into place without the use of tools. The battery thus assembled is a most efficient one. No solder being employed for connections, there is no danger of imperfect connections or the presence of soldering paste that might cause leaks. Furthermore, the cells are thoroughly insulated one from another. There are no noises incurred through the use of this re-chargeable battery.

RELIEF BY RADIO

The Maryland Western Chesapeake Long Island Sound and Delaware Bight radio relief service will offer the following relief service to vessels on the Atlantic coast and receive it on any day. A number of

the crew had fallen into the hold and had been seriously injured. The captain of the ship sent a wireless broadcast asking for help. The call was picked up, says the Public Health Service, in describing the incident, not in Baltimore, but at Cape May, N. J., about 100 miles eastward. As Cape May was separated from the ship by parts of New Jersey and Delaware and by the Eastern Shore of Maryland, no direct help from there was possible.

"But the operator was on the job," continues an announcement by the service. "Promptly he consulted the long distance list in the Baltimore telephone directory and called up the residence of the Public Health Service surgeon in charge of the Marine Hospital in Baltimore—100 miles to the west. The surgeon, roused from sleep to receive the message, asked him to radio certain emergency treatment to the West Calous, and to direct the captain to send a boat to a certain pier in Baltimore where he would find a surgeon waiting to go out to the ship with him and so, in the middle of the night, in less than an hour, a wireless-controlled, sea-going ambulance carrying a Public Health Service officer reached the side of the injured sailor and brought him later to the hospital."

In connection with seamen's right to free radio medical service, it is pointed out that some masters of ships may not as yet have been fully informed, so Surgeon General Hugh S. Cummings has directed that posters giving full information be forwarded to all vessels of the American Merchant Marine. This medical service is really a sort of subsidy to merchant ships and sailors. A century and a quarter ago, when Congress established the Public Health Service, under the title of the Marine Hospital Service, it directed it to render medical aid to every American seaman who applied for it, and that for this each seaman should pay 20 cents a month. This was in 1798; in 1870 the tax was doubled, but in 1888 it was abolished, and since then all such aid has been rendered free. Even the expense of calling the service by radio from away out at sea is borne by the radio companies without expense to ship or sailor.

The forthcoming poster reads:

"The United States Public Health Service provides hospital care and out-patient treatment for sick and disabled seamen. Hospitals with modern equipment, skilled physicians, specialists, dentists and trained nurses are open to all persons employed on documented American vessels, and to the Coast Guard, lighthouse keepers and certain others who help to keep the flag on the seas. An ambulance will go to the dock at any time upon telephonic call from a ship's officer.

"As you are proud of a good ship take pride also in keeping your own body healthy. Most injuries are due to carelessness. Most diseases can be prevented. Prompt care of small injuries may save a limb. Early treatment for disease may save a life or prevent months of illness. Learn to keep well. Pamphlets on tuberculosis venereal diseases and other common diseases are sent on request by the Surgeon General, United States Public Health Service, Washington, D. C. A book, 'The Ship's Medicine Chest and First Aid at Sea,' will be sent on request to the master of the vessel."

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JULY 4, 1923

TERMS TO SUBSCRIBERS

Single Copies.....	Postage Free	7 Cents
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Harry E. Wolff, Pres.
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L. F. Wilkin, Treas.

HARRY E. WOLFF,
Publisher, Inc.,
166 W. 23d St., N. Y.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

WHAT IS A MAN WORTH

Georgine Ludin, says a medical journal, has analyzed us, declaring that "we are made of soap (fat), iron, sugar, lime, phosphorous, magnesium, potassium and sulphur," all having a total value of 98 cents to the individual. That being so, no one hereafter can "look like 300 cents."

A NEW METHOD OF FOOLING FISH

A new method of fooling the fish has been discovered by the owner of a fishing boat in Berwickshire, Scotland. He uses a net dyed the hue of the sea, and the result has always been a much better catch. A convincing test was recently made when a fleet of sixty-five fishing craft competed. One of the boats used nets dyed blue, and the others the usual brown nets. The blue nets in every test bagged the most fish.

SUBMARINES WILL HELP SALVAGE SUNKEN SHIPS

One of the latest methods devised for the recovery of sunken treasure is that of an European company which seeks to use submarines to gain an entrance to the interior of the vessels wherein repose the chests of gold. When the wreck has been definitely located, a submarine will be brought to the scene and sent down to discharge a torpedo into that part of the sunken vessel where the treasure lies. Once that portion of the ship is opened, a mechanical octopus will be lowered to grasp the treasure chest in its tentacles. The octopus is probably the most ingenious part of the entire scheme. It will be equipped with immense searchlights, a cabin, observation ports and periscopes so that those within may guide it to the treasure.

A number of engineering difficulties will be encountered, one of which will be to keep the torpedo from destroying the treasure chest when it blows up the steel sides of the ship. We assume that the engineering company that is promoting the scheme has taken all such difficulties into consideration, however.

RECEDING ICE LINE

The permanent ice layer, or stratum of frozen subsoil, which lies just underneath the blanket of moss common throughout much of Alaska and has led many to believe that crop production could not be made successful there, recedes under cultivation, according to reports from the Federal agricultural experiment stations in that Territory.

At the Rampart station, which is within about fifty miles of the Arctic Circle, the soil was found to be frozen to within eight inches of the surface when the first clearing was made and the moss removed in the summer of 1900. The ice layer has now receded to a depth of six or seven feet.

A well was dug some time ago to a depth of twenty-five feet on land on the lower Yukon River which had been under cultivation about ten years and no permanent ice encountered.

The presence of this frozen subsoil is not without advantage in the interior of Alaska, where the rainfall is light and dry seasons sometimes prevail. At such times the moisture from below is brought to the roots of plants by capillarity and crop production is assured.

LAUGHS

"Where did you get that cigar?" "Somebody gave it to me." "A friend?" "I don't know yet."

"Has Tom given up paying attention to Matilda?" "Ya-as." "What! Jilted her?" "No, married her."

"Why this hush, this elaborate tiptoeing about?" "S-sh! Mother is getting ready to ask father for a little extra money."

"You're kinder to dumb animals than you are to me, your wife." "Well, you try being dumb, and see how kind I'll be."

"Have you any nice beefsteak this morning?" "Sure. Here's some steak as tender as a woman's heart." "Give me a pound of sausage."

If your leg is loose get it tightened before the table tips and breaks your dishes. All work guaranteed.—Furniture repairer's ad. in the *Bremerton Evening Searchlight*.

"Freddy, you shouldn't laugh out loud in the school-room," exclaimed teacher. "I didn't mean to do it," apologized Freddy. "I was smiling, when all of a sudden the smile busted."

Wife—An' phwy do yez be takin' thim pills when yez are well again? Hu-band—Faith, would ye be afther havin' me let a dollar's worth of pills go to waste? It's a thriftless family Oi married into, sure.

"So you want to join our company?" said the theatrical manager to the seely-looking applicant. "In what places have you ever appeared?" "Well," replied he, "my last engagement was with 'The Blot on the Scutcheon.'" "What character did you act?" "I was the Blot."

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

16 INCHES OF HAIL FELL

Thousands of animals perished in a hailstorm in the region of Esquipulas, Honduras, June 9. In the valleys and mountains hail fell to a depth of eighteen inches.

A FEAT OF MEMORY

Herr Otto Schrader of Berlin is the possessor of a phenomenal memory. The German Meteorological Service recently asked him: "What was the weather in Nuremberg, Nov. 24, 1897?" Schrader was asked. "The day was before clear; in the afternoon it became cloudy, with snow flurries. The temperature was two or three degrees below freezing point," answered Schrader. The scientists checked him up and found that he was right.

TO KIDLESS BATHERS NOT LADIES

Captain H. Gillen of the Coney Island police recently called on bathing suits of the beach, and asked a plea to bath house proprietors to put up signs requesting women not to go on the beach without stockings.

There is a regulation covering nearly every other article of bathing apparel except the stockings. Stockings are optional, but the police of Coney Island object to their absence and hence have asked the bath house proprietors to do what they can to make women bathers wear them.

"If they don't wear 'em," said Captain Gillen, "we can't do anything about it—but they're not ladies."

CONCERNING MOONLIGHT

It is probable that very few persons are aware of the fact that the full moon gives several times more than twice the light of the half moon. They may be still more surprised to learn that the ratio is approximately as nine to one.

The reason for this is to be found in the varying angles of reflection presented by the roughened surfaces of our satellite to the sun. The moon is brighter between first quarter and full than between full and last quarter.

CURIOUS LENSES

It is reported that, after many years of experiment, a French scientist has succeeded in constructing lenses of fluid substance, which are capable of being changed into any shape desired by the user.

The lenses are made of a fluid substance, which is contained between two unusually hard glass surfaces, similar to what crystals, in which the reflective powers and other characteristic properties are so chosen that the glass surfaces not only serve to hold the fluid but also combine with the fluid to overcome such defects as are scarcely to be avoided in ordinary lenses. It is for this reason also that the lens is achromatic.

process mentioned in a few weeks, at a cost of from \$500 to \$750. Lenses of smaller diameter for photographic purposes, for opera glasses, reading glasses, etc., can be produced, it is said, at correspondingly smaller cost.

The lens consists of a fluid substance inclosed between two unusually hard glass surfaces, similar to what crystals, in which the reflective powers and other characteristic properties are so chosen that the glass surfaces not only serve to hold the fluid but also combine with the fluid to overcome such defects as are scarcely to be avoided in ordinary lenses. It is for this reason also that the lens is achromatic.

50 RATS ARE WOMAN'S PETS

A complaint lodged with the health officer of Jersey City revealed recently that residents of the Greenville section of Jersey City have been congregating nightly in the vicinity of 266 Old Bergen Road, where some half hundred rats have been frolicking away the dull hours of the evening on the roof of the two-story frame dwelling which occupies the premises.

The rats, huge, gray, bewhiskered old fellows, few under ten inches from tip of nose to base of tail, were plainly visible from the roadway, swarming over the shingled roof, climbing up the screens in the windows of the upper dwelling, or balancing precariously on such bits of furniture in the interior as were visible in the deepening twilight.

An investigation by Health Inspector Edward F. Doran in the upper tenement revealed that Mrs. Mary Tobin, who occupies it with her husband, had made the rats welcome some months ago and was providing them with food and water, they furnishing her with entertainment and diversion in return.

Mrs. Tobin told the inspectors that she buys her pets nine loaves of bread each day—testimony which was amply borne out by the several pans of broken loaves found scattered about the house for the convenience of the rodents. She sometimes varies their diet with a little condensed milk, but they for the most part seemed to be content with the bread except on such occasions as they nibbled away at the brim of Mr. Tobin's derby hat or polished up their incisors on his winter overcoat, all of which bore evidences of their attention.

In addition to this the rats had chewed holes in the floor, gnawed the shingles off the roof, bitten into the walls, and generally and generously with emergency exits, but not to the place of the rats.

The complaint was made by Nicholas Roehrenbeck of Roehrenbeck & Sullivan, proprietors of a tinmith shop on the ground floor of the building. Mr. Roehrenbeck said that he had not noticed the rats until a few months ago when they became obnoxious. He had constructed an ingenious tin trap and baited it with cheese and poison, but could not entice any of the intruders down from their diet of bread and condensed milk.

How I increased my salary more than 300%

by
Joseph Anderson



I AM just the average man—twenty-eight years old, with a wife and a three-year-old youngster. I left school when I was fourteen. My parents didn't want me to do it, but I thought I knew more than they did.

I can see my father now, standing before me, pleading, threatening, coaxing me to keep on with my schooling. With tears in his eyes he told me how he had been a failure all his life because of lack of education—that the untrained man is always forced to work for a small salary—that he had hoped, yes, and prayed, that I would be a more successful man than he was.

But no! My mind was made up. I had been offered a job at nine dollars a week and I was going to take it.

That nine dollars looked awfully big to me. I didn't realize then, nor for years afterward, that I was being paid only for the work of my hands. My brain didn't count.

THEN one day, glancing through a magazine, I came across the story of a man just like myself. He, too, had left school when he was fourteen years of age, and had worked for years at a small salary. But he was ambitious. He decided that he would get out of the rut by training himself to become expert in some line of work.

So he got in touch with the International Correspondence Schools at Scranton and started to study in his spare time at home. It was the turn in the road for him—the beginning of his success.

Most stories like that tell of the presidents of great institutions who are earning \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year. Those stories frighten me. I don't think I could ever earn that much. But this story told of a man who, through spare time study, lifted himself from \$25 to \$75 a week. It made an impression on me because it talked in terms I could understand. It seemed reasonable to suppose that I could do as well.

I tell you it didn't take me long that time to mark and send in that familiar coupon. Information regarding the Course I had marked came back by return mail. I found it wasn't too late to make up the education I had denied myself as a boy.

I was surprised to find out how fascinating a home-study course could be. The I. C. S. worked with me every hour I had to spare. I felt myself growing. I knew there was a bigger job waiting for me somewhere.

Four months after I enrolled my employer came to me and told me that he always gave preference to men who studied their jobs—and that my next

salary envelope would show how much he thought of the improvement in my work.

Today, my salary is more than 300% greater than it was when I began my studies. That increase has meant a better home and all the luxuries that make life worth while.

What I have done, you can do. For I am just an average man. I had no more education to begin with than you have—perhaps not as much. The only difference is a matter of training.

TO every man who is earning less than \$75 a week, I say simply this:—*Find out what the I. C. S. can do for you!*

It will take only a minute of your time to mark and mail the coupon. But that one simple act may change your whole life.

If I hadn't taken that first step four years ago I wouldn't be writing this message to you today! No, and I wouldn't be earning anywhere near \$75 a week, either!

----- TEAR OUT HERE -----
INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box 4490-B, Scranton, Penna.

Without cost or obligation, please tell me how I can qualify for the position or in the subject before which I have marked an X:

BUSINESS TRAINING DEPARTMENT

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial and Importing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labor and Payroll Law | <input type="checkbox"/> International Trade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American History (U.S.A.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Languages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Cost Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Writing |
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TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEPARTMENT

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Write to Riker & King, Advertising Offices, 1133 Broadway, New York City, or 29 East Madison Street, Chicago, for particulars about advertising in this magazine.

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AGENTS WANTED—BIG MONEY AND FAST SALES. Every one buys Gold Intials for his auto. You charge \$1.00, make \$1.00. This is a new, easy way to get rich. Write for particulars. **American Motor Intial Co., Dept. 171, East Orange, N. J.**

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MAKE \$30.00 DAILY, taking orders for \$3.95 Union-made raincoats. Factory prices. Largest commission. Your pay daily. We deliver and collect. **American Eagle Raincoat Co., 155 No. Union St., Dept. 318, Chicago.**

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DETECTIVES NEEDED EVERYWHERE. Work home or travel experience unnecessary. Write George Wagner, former Govt. Detective, 1908 Broadway, N. Y.

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DO YOU WANT NEW FRIENDS? Write Betty Lee, Inc., 4254 Broadway, New York City. Stamp appreciated.

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HANDSOME LADY of means; would marry if suited. (Stamp) Violet, Box 787, Dennison, Ohio.

HUNDREDS seeking marriage. If sincere enclose stamp. 2938 Broadway, Chicago, Illinois.

IF LONESOME exchange jolly letters with beautiful wealthy gentlemen. Eva Moore, Box 903, Jacksonville, Fla. (Stamp).

PERSONAL—Continued

LONELY LITTLE FLAPPER, tired living alone, very wealthy, wants marriage. 166 Mission Unity Club, San Francisco, Calif. (Stamp, please).

LONESOME? Get acquainted. I will help you. My methods insure confidence. Hundreds seeking matrimony. Information free, stamp, please. Mrs. Franz, 947 Montana St., Chicago.

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MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY with photos and descriptions free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 545, Kansas City, Mo.

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MARRY: Thousands congenial people, worth from \$1,000 to \$50,000 seeking early marriage, descriptions, photos, introductions free. Sealed. Either sex. Send no money. Address Standard Cor. Club, Grayslake, Ill.

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TOBACCO or Snuff Habit cured or no pay. \$1.00 if cured. Remedy sent on trial. Superba Co., PC, Baltimore, Md.

KRUGER'S HIDDEN GOLD DISCOVERED

South Africa is greatly excited over the reported discovery in the Pietersburg district of a vast sum of gold which Paul Kruger, late President of the Transvaal, is said to have buried in his flight to Delagoa Bay and Europe, about twenty years ago, to escape capture by the British.

The Johannesburg correspondent of the London Times, who sends the story, says that gold bars and coins, comprising part of the fortune of Kruger, have been recovered.

The legend of "the Kruger millions" was once a favorite topic of discussion here and in South Africa, but it has been almost forgotten in recent years.

Recovery of the fabled fortune of Paul Kruger, who left an estate valued at \$3,750,000, has been the goal of adventurers and commercial syndicates for some time. More than \$3,000,000 in gold, representing the bulk of Kruger's money, was cemented in the hold of the bark Landak, which sank on Tonalis Reef, off the Zulu coast about twenty years ago. This money, which has never been recovered, is said to have been supplied by Kruger previous to 1894.

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